

# CHILDREN'S World

ANNUAL NUMBER

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# CHILDREN'S World

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Chief editor  
**SHANKAR**

Editor  
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Cover: "Harvest" by Liyange Gerard Priyantha Silva (15) Sri Lanka

# READERSHIP SURVEY

(Questionnaire for the age group 6-16)

- CUT ALONG THIS LINE -

1. Name and address

In the public library? .....

By directly subscribing? .....

8. If you get your own copy, do you, after reading it,

Give it to a friend?.....

Keep it for further reading?.....

Sell away old copies?.....

2. Age-----

3. Class-----

4. School-----

9. Do other members in your family read the magazine?

Brothers .....

Sisters .....

Parents .....

Other adult members .....

5. When did you start reading 'Children's World'? (Put tick mark)

Less than a year ago .....

One year ago .....

Two years ago .....

Three years ago .....

Four years ago .....

Five years ago .....

More than five years ago .....

10. Have you at any time sent any contributions to the magazine?

Painting .....

Poems .....

Stories .....

Articles .....

Puzzles .....

Jokes .....

Other items .....

6. Do you own a copy for yourself?.....

....share it with a friend? .....

....read it in a library?.....

7. Where did you see the magazine for the first time?

With the newspaper boy?

With a friend?

In the bookshop?

In the school library?

11. Have your contributions been published?

Once .....

More than once .....

Occasionally .....

Regularly .....

(PTO)



12. Do you find the magazine

Below your standard? ..

Above your standard?

Just adequate?

c) -----

d) -----

e) -----

f) -----

13. What features in the magazine interest you the most?

(Number 1, 2, 3 according to the order of your preference)

Stories .....

Poems .....

Comics .....

Science .....

Sports .....

Puzzles .....

Hobbies .....

Books and authors .....

How-to-do .....

Plays .....

Jokes .....

Other items: .....

(Please specify) .....

14. In this Annual Number, which six items do you find most attractive (in the order of your preference)

a)

b)

15. Is there any item that you have missed in the magazine and which you would like to read about?

a) -----

b) -----

c) -----

16. a) Do you like the paintings given on the cover?

Yes .... No.....

b) Would you like to see something other than painting on the cover?

\*Yes .... No.....

\*Please specify.....

17. Have you any suggestions for improving the magazine?

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18. Do you read other magazines?  
Can you name them?

a) -----

b) -----

c) -----

N.B. Views and suggestions from adult-readers are also welcome.

Mail your reply to:

Editor, CHILDREN'S WORLD, Nehru House, New Delhi 110 002

## To Our Readers

ANOTHER year has come round, and your magazine "is ten, going on eleven"—to adapt the lines of a popular song.

"Children's World" was started with the object of bringing together the children of the world. We are happy that they have freely "communicated" with each other through their writings and drawings in the magazine.

We are also content that we have kept up our policy of allowing children, wherever they are, to feel that it is **their** journal.

Childhood is a creative phase in one's life. The magazine has carried some of the best efforts of children from different parts of the world. The grown-ups, too, have contributed to maintaining the high standard that we had set for ourselves. And together we went a step further to ensure a healthy standard.

A decade has thus passed by, and it is time we took stock. What better method can there be except to ask our readers themselves what they have felt about the magazine? A readership survey, appearing elsewhere in this issue, will attempt it in a modest scale. We hope each and everyone of our readers will respond and tell us how best we can reach out to their wishes.

It is for children to make what they will of "Children's World".

*Editor*



**M**Y cat's name is Mausí Mausí  
She always hunts mice.

She hunts in the morning  
She hunts in the evening  
She hunts the whole night through.

But she could not catch a single mouse,  
not even a little mouse,  
no mouse at all.

Then my cat  
feels very sad  
and does not eat her food.  
"You will catch a mouse today," I tell her  
But she does not listen,  
and does not drink her milk.

Toni comes—  
He is my brother.  
"What's wrong with Mausí Mausí?" he asks.  
I tell him.  
"You will catch a mouse today," he tells her  
and strokes her back.  
But she does not listen  
and does not drink her milk.

My mother comes and asks,  
"Why is she so sad,

# MAUSI MAUSI MY CAT

Little Mausi Mausi your cat?"  
So I tell her.  
"You'll surely catch a mouse," Mother says,  
"if not today, then tomorrow,  
or the day after tomorrow,  
one day you will."  
But Mausi Mausi my cat does not listen  
and does not drink her milk.

And then Grandfather comes,  
He looks at my cat.  
"Why is she so sad?" he asks.  
So I tell him,  
I tell him everything.  
"But why?" he asks,  
"why can't she find a mouse?  
There are plenty just behind the house.  
Go, Mausi Mausi,  
go and catch them."  
And Mausi Mausi my cat listens  
and drinks her milk.  
She jumps into the garden  
just behind the house  
she catches a mouse.  
Yes, she has.

That's why her name is Mausi Mausi,  
Mausi Mausi the cat.

*Sigrun Srivastava*

## HAPPINESS

Happiness is sharing life with a friend;  
Sharing the days that return not again.  
Happiness is a bird flying high and free;  
Gliding over the open sea.

Happiness is a mother with her child;  
A wind blowing freely, cool and wild.  
Happiness is knowing that most people  
care;  
And knowing that life will always be fair

Happiness is dreaming on a lovely Spring  
day;  
Letting the hours just flow away.  
Happiness is hugging a kitten so small:  
Not caring about anything else at all.

Happiness is having fun each day;  
Helping people in every way.  
Happiness is loving, sharing and giving,  
And happiness is having the pleasure of  
living.

*Linda Williams (12)  
Australia*

## I'M A PRETTY DOLL

I am a pretty doll,  
I'm very bright and small,  
But sad to say I don't have a name,  
Bahl my mistress says  
There's no need to keep a name  
For such a small stupid doll.  
She throws me and the other dolls  
Like cricket balls.  
I hope my mistress will learn  
To be good and kind,  
But I know that she's not like  
Other children so nice and fine.

*Preeti Kattishettar (11)  
India*

## WHAT IS RED ?

Red is gay and very happy,  
Red rubies dazzling bright in the night.  
Red is also for emergency,  
Lights flashing and bright!  
Flaxes grow red in all gardens.  
Red is sometimes serious,  
And sometimes joyful.

*Dion Thomas Kemsley (9)  
New Zealand*

## MY IMAGINATION

My imagination has gone far and wide,  
Searching the earth for any surprise,  
It has seen each of the planets orbit the  
sun,

And each of the animals quickly run.  
It has explored the clouds up above,  
And far beneath the ocean's love,  
It has seen the seasons come and go,  
And has seen each river gently flow.  
It has seen a shadow in the dark,  
And has heard the voice of the lovely  
lark.

It has seen the whitecaps on the sea,  
And has even seen the inside of me.  
There is no end,  
To my imagination's bend!

*Ellen Katherine Nielsen (11)*  
*Canada*

## TUMBLING CLOWNS

What fun he has,  
Rolling over and over and over,  
And down and down and down.  
While the children laugh.  
And they all clap, another clown  
Comes and pushes and pushes him  
Round and round,  
Till they lie very still, and the children  
Are laughing and clapping—  
Till they do it again!

*Adam Poulsen (6)*  
*Britain*

## TRANSITION

Today I wept for the child in me  
I had reached out for her  
and  
When I could not find her,  
I wept .....  
I wept for she had gone  
and I had not known.

Then,  
within me  
something awoke  
and a new voice,  
soft  
in its birth,  
said,  
"Weep not  
for the passing of time  
but look forward to tomorrow  
for within your hands  
you hold  
the promise of tomorrow."

I looked  
to this new voice  
within me  
and found  
a new person!  
I smiled  
as I recognised her,  
for she was my child ..... grown up.

*Teo Ching Leun (15)*  
*Singapore*



**L**ONG, long ago there ruled in a small state called Kuntalnagar a king who was wise, honest, and just. He was loved very much by all his subjects.

The king had a jester named Majakya in his court. His job was to make the king laugh, and he soon became a favourite. But, one day, the king was in a bad mood and when Majakya tried to make him laugh, the king did not like it.

"Stop your foolish chatter!" cried the king. "Be-gone from here!"

Majakya ran out of the court. But an hour later, when the king was in a better mood, he sent for the jester. Majakya came into the court with his face covered, and everybody present burst out

laughing. The king took it as a personal insult and was angry once again.

"You fool! You shall die for this " he roared. He then ordered his guards to put Majakya into prison. "This fool shall die tomorrow at sunrise! I can no longer bear the sight of him. Take him away!"

In the night, the king told the queen what had happened. The queen was pained to hear that the jester would be put to death. She pleaded with the king to spare his life. But the king refused. The queen then asked him if he would keep another jester.

"No," replied the king. "Instead, I shall keep a wise man."

# MAJAKYA

## OF KUNTALNAGAR

"Is there any man fit for the job, my lord?" asked the queen.

"I don't know," replied the king. "I shall take a test tomorrow. I shall ask all those present to suggest the best way Majakya should be killed. The man who comes out with the wisest suggestion shall be the wise man of the court."

Early next morning, a huge crowd gathered outside the court to see Majakya being put to death. The king ordered his guards to bring the jester.

Then the king addressed the people. "Can anybody here suggest the best way this fool should be killed? He shall be made the wise man of my court!"



Somebody suggested that he be fed to hungry lions; another, that he be fed to vultures. The king rejected the suggestions.

Then the queen whispered in the king's ear. "I think you ought to ask Majakya how *he* would like to die, my lord. You are a just king, and the people are aware of that."

"But he is a fool!" said the king.

"True, my lord," said the queen, "but sometimes fools come forth with very good suggestions. You must give the jester a chance."

The king reflected, then turned to the jester. "I wish to give you a chance to decide how you wish to die. But be quick!"

The queen kept her fingers crossed, and hoped the jester would make a wise suggestion and thereby, not only save his neck but also be made the wise man of the court!

The king grew impatient. "Go on, tell me!" he roared. "I cannot wait!"

Majakya said softly and suavely. "My lord, indeed you are very just. You have asked me to suggest how I wish to die. Well, my lord, I wish to die of old age!"

The king's jaws hung down as he turned to his queen. "What have you to say to that?"

The queen smiled. "That makes him the wisest man in the court, my lord," she said.

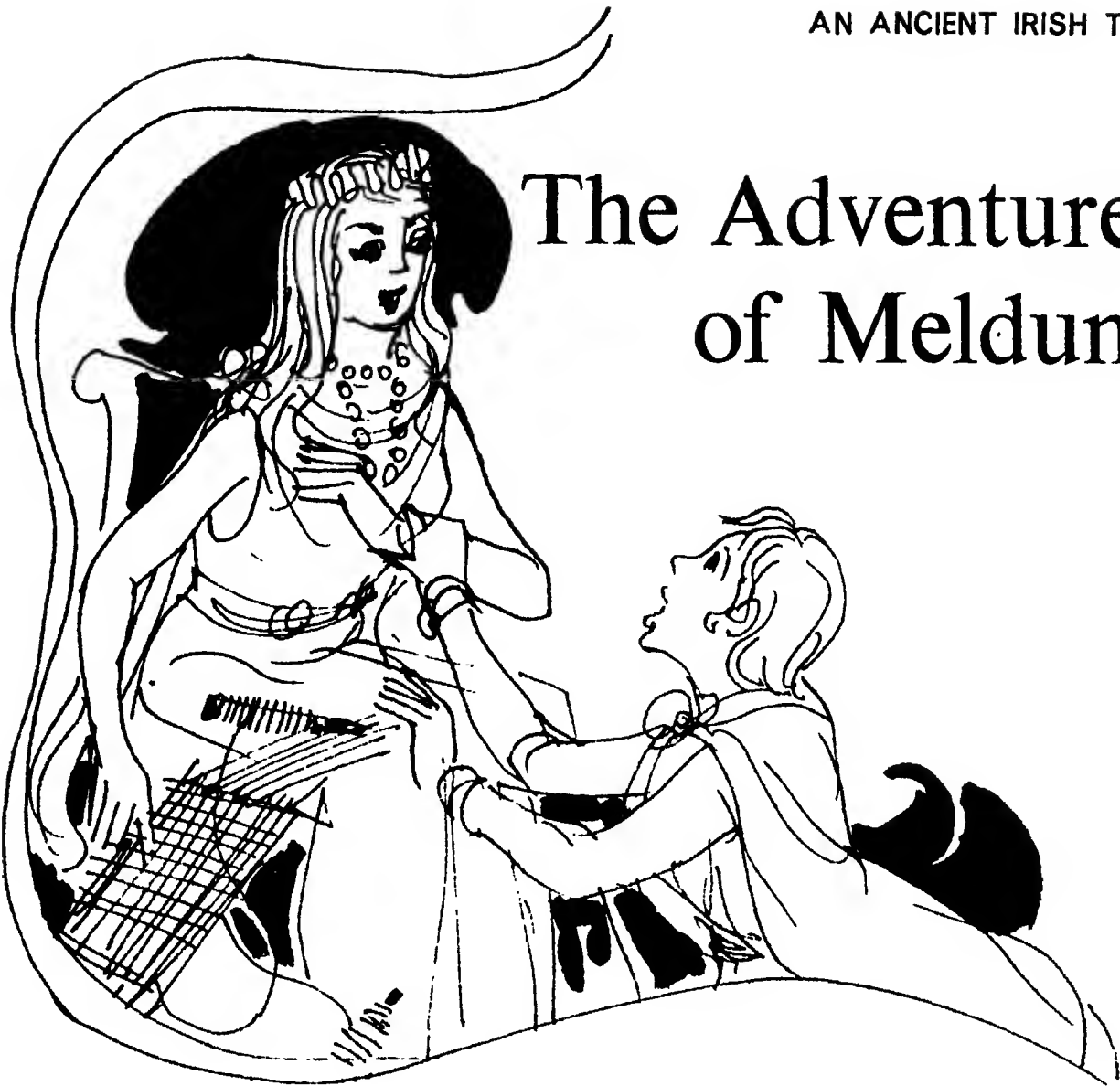
"Indeed!" agreed the king with some surprise.

Then he ordered the guards to remove the chains and set the jester free.

"Majakya!" cried the king. "From today your name shall be Buddhiman, and you shall be the wise man of my court. I shall respect whatever you say!"

*Hazel Gomez*





# The Adventures of Meldune

**M**ELDUNE was the foster-child of the widowed queen of Ireland, but she loved him more than her own three sons. Neither Meldunc nor his foster-brothers knew who his real parents were.

One morning, Meldune was playing with the three princes and other boys near the ruins of a church. An old man stood nearby, watching them. After sometime, Meldune sat down under the shade of an oak tree. The old man went to him and said, "You were playing at the very spot where your father was killed. It is time you avenged his cruel death."

"You mean the king of Ireland? But he died of fever," cried Meldune in great

surprise.

"The king was your foster-father. Your father was a famous warrior," replied the old man and, before Meldune could ask him anything else, he hurried away.

"Come back, Meldune!" called out the boys, but Meldune shook his head and ran towards the palace.

The queen was sitting in her parlour, weaving gold thread on a silver loom. "Mother, who were my parents?" asked Meldune breathlessly.

The loom slipped out of the queen's hands as she stared at her foster-son.

"Tell me," insisted Meldune.

"I've been both father and mother to you.

Isn't that enough?" she said, greatly troubled.

"I want the truth," said Meldune firmly.

The queen was forced to answer him. "You are the son of my best friend. She is now a nun, spending her life in prayers and good deeds. Your father was the bravest man in Ireland. He was killed a month before you were born."

"Who killed him?" Meldune, his face hard with hatred.

"Some savage men from an island far from here. Not only did they kill him, they burnt the church he built, as well," replied the queen.

Meldune wept for the father he had never seen, but not for long. "The son of a warrior does not shed tears; he avenges wrongs. I will go to the distant island and will never come back until I have punished my father's killers," he said.

"Who will look after me?" wailed the queen. ~

"Your three sons," replied Meldune.

"You must consult the priests before you set out. There is absolutely nothing they do not know," advised the queen, wiping away her tears.

Meldune obeyed her and went to the priests. "I'm going on a voyage to find and punish my father's killers. Will I succeed?" he asked eagerly.

The priests looked at Meldune for a long time. At last the oldest of them spoke. "You will succeed only if you do as we tell you. Listen carefully. Take seventeen warriors with you—not one more nor one less. The boat must be made of wicker, covered with leather."

Another priest told Meldune of the day on which to start the journey, and the direction he must follow.

Soon the boat was made and Meldune chose seventeen brave young men to go with him. The sail was set and the boat started gliding over the waves of the sea. They had not gone very far when they saw Meldune's foster-brothers standing on the shore. "Take us with you, Meldune!" they shouted.

"Look after your mother, the queen," Meldune shouted back, with a frown.

But the three princes had made up their minds to go with Meldune. So they waded into the water and swam after Meldune's boat. He had to take them in or they would have drowned. But he was displeased.

After a few days they reached the island where the savages lived. But before the boat could be beached, a terrible storm arose. The vessel was tossed violently by the waves, as tall as mountains. None of the men had seen such a storm. No life was lost, but when the storm was over, the boat drifted out in the open sea. "Now we don't know where we are," said Meldune in anger and sorrow. "This is the result of disobeying the priests."

His foster-brothers blushed with shame.

Meldune had lost all sense of direction and the boat was adrift for many months. They visited thirty-three islands and saw so many strange things that I can tell you only a few of them.

One island was full of ants as big as foals; another isle had pigs with skin as bright and red as hot fire.

Meldune and his companions found hoof marks as large as ships in a third island. "Let us go away from here," said one of his foster-brothers.

Then they came to another island which looked uninhabited. Right in the middle of the island there was a beautiful house. They entered it quite easily, for the doors were unlocked. The walls were richly decorated with all sorts of jewels and arms. A big table was spread with rich food. Near the table, a kitten was chasing its own tail. "We are hungry, little puss. May we eat?" asked Meldune.

As the kitten did not reply, Meldune and the others sat down and ate and drank to their fill, for they did not have much to eat for many days. At last they rose.

One of Meldune's foster-brothers took a necklace from the wall and put it in his pouch. "Put it back, you thief!" cried Meldune, full of rage.

"I will not," replied the prince.

Then the kitten flew at him. Instantly,

the prince was burnt, and all that was left of him was just a handful of ashes.

With a heavy heart Meldune sailed away. Soon his sadness changed to joy when they came to the Isle of Flowers. Even when they were some distance away, a fragrant breeze blew, sweeter than any perfume.

The Isle of Flowers consisted of a lofty hill, where neither a tree nor an animal could be seen. The top of the hill seemed to have a crest of snow, but when Meldune and his men climbed up, they found it covered with white lilies. Millions of these grew down the hill, giving the look of a glacier. But lilies were not the only flowers that grew in this wonderland. Roses, narcissi, hyacinths, violets, snowdrops, convolvus, pansies, daffodils—flowers of all seasons and from all countries lit up the hillside. Not an inch of space was without flowers.

The jewel-bright land filled the weary travellers with great delight, and they sang songs of hope and joy, rolling on the soft flowers. "We will live here till we die!" cried one of Meldune's foster-brothers.

"But what will you eat?" asked Meldune with a smile.

The prince was silent, for not a single flower could be eaten. In fact, some of them were poisonous. Even the streams were choked with water-lilies. So, sighing deeply and with many a backward glance, the men went back to their ship and set sail.

Presently they reached an island which was as silent as a graveyard. The many waterfalls there were silent and so were the birds. Meldune and his men too lost their voices. The men whose war-cry struck terror in the hearts of their enemies could only whisper now. Worried, they left the island as soon as they could and then the spell was broken.

Next, Meldune came to the Island of Sorrow where dark men sat shedding tears. One of the queen's sons went to them. At once, his skin darkened and he started weeping like the islanders. With great difficulty he was brought back to the boat and the enchantment was broken though after

many days, when they reached another island.

A giant lived there, forever busy, grinding something in an enormous mill.

"What are you grinding?" asked Meldune.

"Misers' wealth," replied the giant.

He looked so grim that Meldune was happy to go back to his boat.

Meldune's vessel was then borne by the wind to a strange country. On landing, he found a castle with a brass door and a bridge of glass. Meldune tried to cross the bridge but it threw him back with great force. All the others failed to cross it, too. After many attempts, one warrior did manage to reach the brass door. He knocked on it and wonderful music was heard. It was so soothing that all the men fell fast asleep.

They slept for three days. On the fourth day, a beautiful woman opened the door and welcomed the travellers. They were given warm, perfumed baths, delicious food, and feather beds. With light hearts, Meldune and the others fell asleep. But at dawn they found themselves on the deck of their boat. The magic island had just disappeared!

Suddenly, the waves of the sea became as clear as glass. When the men looked from their boat into the waters, they saw a land of heavenly beauty, full of large palaces and gardens, "the Pure Land of Perfect Happiness". Carefree, beautiful men and women tended their flocks in woods more beautiful than the Isle of Flowers. "That is the land for us," cried three of Meldune's most trusted men, and before he could stop them, they dived into the waves and were drowned. The next moment, the enchanted land was no longer there and the waves were as before.

With aching arms the men rowed on over the sea. "I am tired of unknown countries," said Meldune with a sigh. "I do not want any more adventures."

But before them was a rocky little island, where not even a blade of grass grew. An



old man was the only living being in that barren land. He looked a hermit and he welcomed Meldune warmly.

"Why do you live here?" asked Meldune, full of curiosity.

"Many years ago I was a monk," replied the hermit. "One night, I stole the church treasures and loaded a boat with them. Then I started rowing. But before I could go far, I saw an angel sitting on a wave. 'Repent!' said the heavenly being in a stern voice, 'or your boat will not move.' I was afraid, so I fell on my knees and confessed my sin.

"'Throw your stolen treasures into the sea,' ordered the angel.

"I obeyed the angel and he disappeared. After sometime, my boat floated ashore in this island. I left the boat and knelt on a rock, praying to God.

"When my prayers were over, I found some beings looking like human beings, carrying dishes full of nourishing food. It is they who have fed me every day or I would have perished of hunger long ago."

Meldune looked at the old hermit with great respect. He looked wise and kind, with so many years of prayer. "Now tell me, who are you?" asked the hermit, breaking the silence.

Meldune told him all about himself.

"All I want is to avenge my father's murder," he ended.

The hermit looked displeased. "Life is too short for revenge. You should forgive your enemies. Besides, your foster-mother, the only mother you know, has lost a son. It is your duty to take his place," he said.

Meldune thought awhile. "After all, nothing can bring back my father, and the queen needs me."

His mind made up, he said, "I will do as you tell me."

"God be with you," blessed the old hermit.

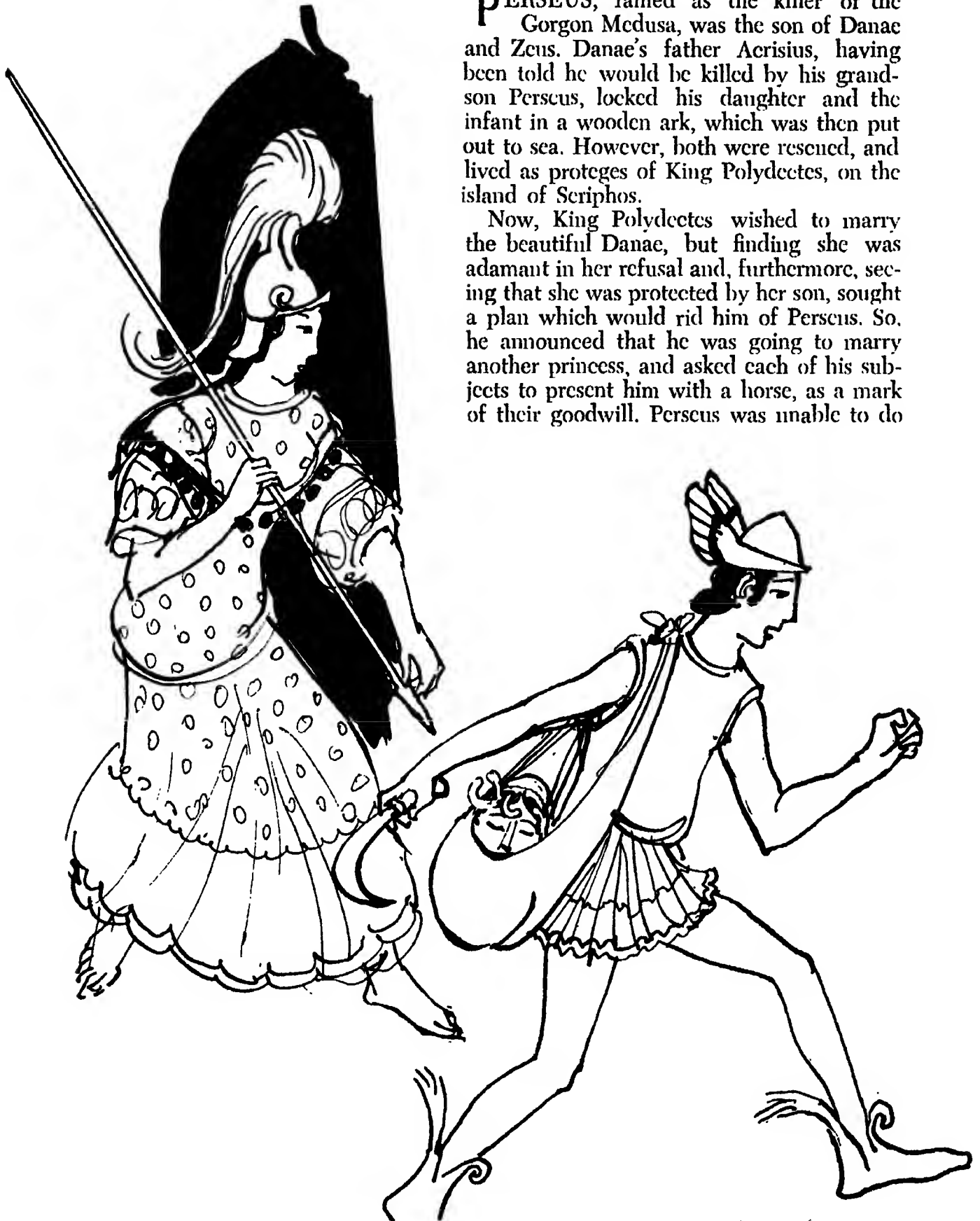
For the last time Meldune set sail. Soon they came near the island where the savage murderers lived, but Meldune did not pause. After a few days, they saw a falcon, the same as seen in Ireland and they followed it. Before long, they reached Ireland. Meldune's wanderings were over.

*Sujaya Sen*

# PERSEUS

**P**ERSEUS, famed as the killer of the Gorgon Medusa, was the son of Danae and Zeus. Danae's father Acrisius, having been told he would be killed by his grandson Perseus, locked his daughter and the infant in a wooden ark, which was then put out to sea. However, both were rescued, and lived as proteges of King Polydectes, on the island of Seriphos.

Now, King Polydectes wished to marry the beautiful Danae, but finding she was adamant in her refusal and, furthermore, seeing that she was protected by her son, sought a plan which would rid him of Perseus. So, he announced that he was going to marry another princess, and asked each of his subjects to present him with a horse, as a mark of their goodwill. Perseus was unable to do



so, but wishing to show his gratitude to the king for renouncing his mother's hand, he rashly offered to get him the Gorgon Medusa's head, instead. King Polydectes agreed to this with alacrity, secretly hoping that Perseus would perish in the attempt.

The Gorgon Medusa was a monstrous creature, with huge teeth, a protruding tongue, and snakes for hair. Her face was so hideous that all who looked upon her were turned to stone. Rather daunted by the magnitude of the task he had undertaken, Perseus sought Athene's help. Athene hated Medusa, and so willingly agreed to go to his aid. First she took him to a city, so that he would be able to distinguish Medusa from her sisters, Euryale and Sthenos. Next, she gave him a bright, shining shield and warned him never to look at Medusa directly, but only at her reflection in the shield.

Hermes then helped him further by giving him a sharp sickle, with which he could decapitate the Gorgon. Perseus still required three things—the magic sandals, the helmet of invisibility, and the magic bag to put the decapitated head in. Now, these articles were being guarded by the Stygian nymphs, whose whereabouts were known only to the Gracae, the Gorgons' three sisters, who had only one eye and one tooth between them. Perseus then went to their thrones, at the foot of Mount Atlas, and snatching the tooth and eye, as they passed it from one to the other, refused to return them, until they revealed the dwelling place of the Stygian nymphs.

Having got the information he wanted, he took the three articles from the nymphs and, guided by Athene, flew to the land of the Gorgons. On alighting, he found the three sisters asleep, surrounded by the petrified forms of men and beasts. Hastily, lest they awoke, he positioned his shield, so he could see Medusa's reflection in it, then cut off her head with one stroke of the sickle. Whereupon, to his amazement, out sprang the winged horse Pegasus, son of Medusa and Poseidon, and the warrior Chrysaor, from her corpse. Alarmed, he flew off, and in time, for Pegasus and Chrysaor roused their aunts, the other two Gorgons, who gave chase. But, thanks to the helmet of invisibility, he evaded them.

After several other exciting adventures, in one of which he rescued his future bride, the beautiful Andromeda, from a ferocious sea monster, he returned to Seriphos. There he found his mother plagued by the king's attentions and he himself insulted and scorned. Furious, he turned the Gorgon's head at them, as they sat at a banquet, turning King Polydectes and his courtiers to stone. (The circle of stones is still at Seriphos.)

Perseus gave the Gorgon's head to Athene, who fixed it on her aegis, and Hermes returned the magic bag, sandals, and helmet to the Stygian nymphs. Perseus and Andromeda ruled in Tirys and lived happily together.

*Geeta Chowdhry*

## FLOWERS

There are many flowers in this great wide world,  
They go a long way to adorn our mother earth

They are of many colours too,  
Red, pink, yellow and blue.

The daffodils,  
In valleys and on hills,  
The lilies in the pond,  
And far beyond  
Are the sunflowers bright,  
Their petals sparkling in the daylight.

The roses are a deep red,  
And the marigolds in their little bed,  
Now what do my eyes meet?  
Yes, the buttercups, gleaming  
in the sun's heat.  
The dahlias so pink,  
And the dog flowers trying to wink.

The dandelions so tall  
And the pansies so small,  
The poppy's so pretty,  
And the florets, clustered and tiny.  
The daisies white,  
Which shine in the night.  
My, my, flowers do make the  
World a wonderful sight!

*Radhika Sonia Bhalotra (11)  
India*

# When Lessons Are Over



WHO would not look forward to leisure-time, whether after lessons, or after work? Unlike schools, attendance at the numerous hobby clubs is by no means compulsory for children in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, today teenagers invariably attend children's sport schools, amateur art clubs, Palaces of Young Pioneers, etc.

Seven years ago, a young film director, Viktor Kimen, set up a children's film studio at one of the Young Pioneer Palaces. Among other entrants were ten so-called 'difficult kids', kids who had given both

teachers and parents a good deal of trouble. Despite apprehensions and predictions, they neither stole nor broke anything at the studio. What's more, they themselves changed—they found that it was much more interesting to shoot a film than to sit hours on end watching a movie!

At the Lipetsk Elektrostal Works, the key to activities for children is sport. At the voluntary sport society there, special schools of ju-jitsu and sambo were organized. They coach 500-600 teenagers at a time. Viktor Yermakov, chief of the sport-training section of the sport society's



school, feels that lessons there teach teenagers real courage and discipline.

Boris Lesyuk heads the sport-cum-sanitation camp for teenagers on the Don River. His kids have crisscrossed the country on motorcycles and boats. They do every little thing with their own hands. Lesyuk's view is that every teenager must have a definite "barrier of difficulty" in life in order to steel his character.

There are special scientific-research and pedagogical institutes in the Soviet Union to organise school children's free time. One of the leading experts in the field is Semyon Shmakov, of the Lipetsk Teachers' Training Institute. According to him, the main thing in working out children's leisure is the grown-ups' duty to give every single teenager the opportunity, sooner or later, to be a star of the first magnitude. In one of his studies, he cites the example of an ungainly boy, who never seemed to manage to cope with anything he undertook till, one day in a summer camp, he showed himself to be an excellent angler, hauling out a record catch of carp! After that, literally, under the eyes of his astounded teacher, the boy changed—seemed to grow, to brace himself, to become a man. A school cannot discover the full range of a teenager's abilities. Only his intellect, his purposefulness and will-power can be disclosed there. But courage, physical stamina, sportsmanship, the magnanimity of the strong—all these are features that can manifest themselves only during a teenager's leisure time. This is where the numerous hobby clubs step in to assist in his upbringing.

All educators recognize the role of sport in activities for children. Yet sport alone does not guarantee society against juveniles violating the law, does not oblige them to adopt all the moral values. It is, therefore, felt that a 'difficult' teenager must find himself in a strong group, must take from it everything of the very best that it has.

It is the school teachers, who are usually engaged in hobby clubs' activities, who go hiking with the children.

*Alexander Nadzharov*

APRIL 1978



At the Rally of Young Astronomers near the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, Akif Agayev from Baku (in the foreground) and Oleg Kushlevich of Moscow prepare their telescope. On the facing page: Members of the Roveeniki children's choreographic ensemble perform the Lezginka Dance.



Above: A 6th former of Uelen busy at handiwork in the bone-carving shop. Below: Fyodor Romichev, well-known sportsman, and his wards at a sports training school in Moscow.





# The Triumphant Smile

**H**UMAYUN lay in a coma on his bed. His father, Babar, stood beside him, sad and depressed. The Chief Vizier and the nobles arrayed themselves behind him. The queen, with tears in her eyes, begged of the emperor, "Save Humayun's life, O my Lord." She sobbed and besought him once again, "Save my son from the clutches of death."

Babar stood aghast and moaned in grief. "O God, how helpless I am! Can't I save my son from death? Can't I save my own blood—my own flesh....?"

Soon the palace herald announced: "Here comes Shahi Hakim—the chief doctor and surgeon."

The Hakim entered the room and offered his respects to the emperor. No sooner had the Hakim entered than the emperor knelt down before him pleading, "O life-giver! Save my child!"

The Hakim was taken aback and at once he bent down to raise the emperor and said, "O my lord! I'm just an ordinary servant of yours. I promise I'll not leave any stone unturned, but life is in the hands of God. Keep faith in Him. He is 'Rahim', he is 'Karim'—the kind and the merciful. Beg mercy from Him, sir. Let me examine the patient and diagnose his illness."

He held Humayun's wrist by his fingers and began to feel his pulse. Then he opened his closed eyelids. He tried to open his mouth, too. But it was tight shut. The Hakim opened up Humayun's shirt and applied some strong-smelling balms. The prince slowly opened his eyes and mouth, too, but he could not recognise anyone around him.

"Prince! Asalam Walckum," the Hakim greeted him, but there was no reply. He repeated, "Asalam Walekum. Look at me, prince. Look at your father. Don't you recognise your mother sitting by your side?"

There was still no reply—no response! His vacant looks were simply fixed on the ceiling. The queen sobbed in grief taking the boy in her arms and bewailed, "O Humayun, my son, won't you anymore call me 'Amma'? Here...here...look at your 'Abba'. Speak out, my son, speak...a few words."

Humayun uttered no words. Babar stood dazed beside the Hakim, while the queen's cries and wails continued to tear the skies.

The Hakim opened another bottle and poured a few drops of nectar onto Humayun's parted lips. But the drops flowed out. The Hakim mumbled, "What! He has not accepted the medicine? Sure, his throat is swollen and clogged." He took out a piece of paper and wrote down the names of some medicines. "Here, my lord! I prescribe these potions for the patient. Kindly try them. Howal Shafi! May God cure him," said the Hakim. He handed over the slip to the emperor and left the palace in dismay.

Babar passed the prescription to the Chief Vizier. Meanwhile, one of the court priests had come up. He bowed low and said, "My lord! Kindly offer to God whatever you love most. I am sure God will be kind enough to give a new life to Humayun."

"Should I renounce my wealth, my riches, my kingdom?" asked Babar.

"That's up to you, my lord. You should offer that you love most," the priest pleaded.

"What do I love most?" the emperor muttered in disgust....

"Better question yourself, my lord, and find out what is dearest to your Majesty," enjoined the priest.

"Dearest to my heart is Humayun—none else," replied Babar.

"Surely, to save the prince, your Majesty would not hesitate to make an equally dearest offer to Allah!" besought the priest, "an offering that you love most."

"Aye! it is my own life that I love most," said Babar with a triumphant smile

on his lips, and declared, "Allah-o-Akbar! (God is Great) In the presence of all nobles and courtiers of my empire, I, Zaheer-ud-Din Babar, do hereby offer my own life to God Almighty, to save Humayun, my dearest son. Let his malaise take over me. Let Humayun recover from his illness and be hale and hearty, once again. Let me die and let Humayun live forever and ever." He took this vow thrice and sat down on the mat for prayers for his life.

Soon, the sobbing queen flung herself at Babar's feet and cried, "No, no, my lord! You will not die. Let the Almighty take away my life to revive Humayun. Let Humayun live under your patronage."

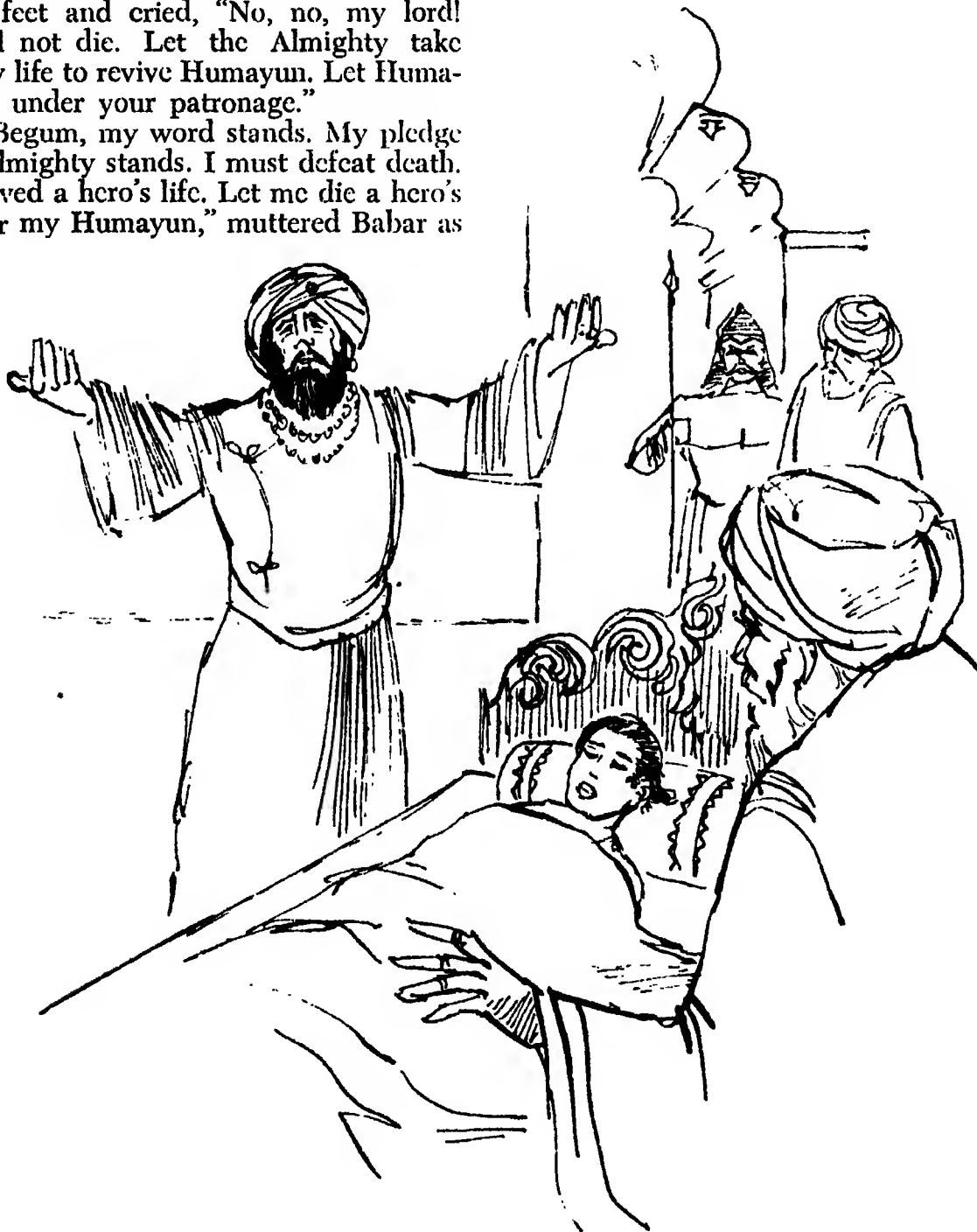
"No, Begum, my word stands. My pledge to the Almighty stands. I must defeat death. I have lived a hero's life. Let me die a hero's death for my Humayun," muttered Babar as

he lay down on the mat feeling some dizziness and pain in his chest. "Allah-o-Akbar," Babar uttered again with the same triumphant smile on his lips and closed his eyes.

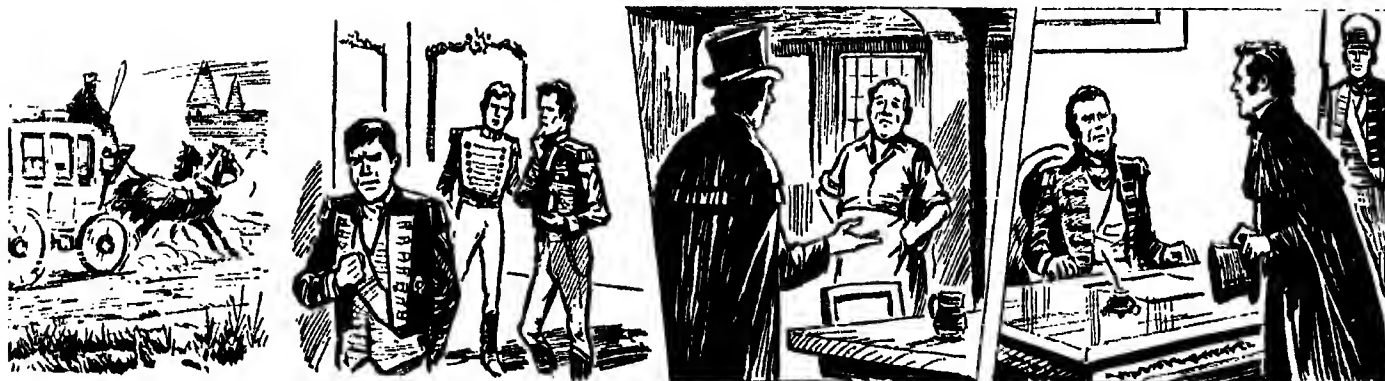
The moment Babar closed his eyes, Humayun opened his eyes, and regained consciousness to the surprise of all present there.

K.C. Batra

(Courtesy : Writers Workshop)



# FAMOUS MYSTERIES—3:



**B**EFORE leaving Vienna for England in 1809, Benjamin Bathurst carefully disguised himself as an itinerant merchant and assumed the name of Koch. With pistols in his pockets and more weapons concealed in the rear of his carriage, he set out nervously, accompanied by his valet and secretary.

Why the mystery? Bathurst was a British Foreign Office courier and had been sent to Vienna to persuade the Austrians to open a second front against Napoleon, while Britain fought him in Spain. The half-hearted Austrian efforts had failed and Bathurst was apparently convinced that Napoleon was bent on taking personal revenge.

The party reached Berlin without misadventure, then proceeded as far as Peleberg en route to Hamburg. Here they stopped at the post-house to change horses and repaired to the White Swan Inn for a meal, where Bathurst broke his silence only to question the innkeeper.

What was the name and address of Peleberg's chief military officer? he asked. On obtaining the details, he rushed off to Captain Klitzing's residence and declaring his life to be in danger, requested the officer to provide a guard of two troopers as he had decided to stay at the Inn overnight.



**P**UZZLED, but hoping to pacify the distraught 'merchant', Klitzing obliged. After returning to the Inn with his escort, Bathurst locked himself in his room and set about writing letters and destroying documents. But, instead of being reassured, his panic only increased, and he suddenly announced another change of plan.

His bewildered travelling companions heard they were to push on to Hamburg that very night. Bathurst ordered fresh horses, paid his bill, and dismissed the troopers. Restlessly waiting to leave, Bathurst patted the heads of the horses. The ostler was observing his agonised expression by the glow from his lantern.

Bathurst walked around the horses to the gloomy ill-lit area on the other side, and out of sight. Now it was the ostler and postilion, and the sorely-tried secretary and valet who waited restlessly — for Bathurst to return, so the carriage could depart. But Bathurst did not return.

Time ticked on. Then, disquietened, they searched for Bathurst, but finding his room empty and no sign of him anywhere in the Inn, they scoured the yard, the post-house, the nearby streets and alleys. They called out Klitzing. But, on this night of November 25, 1809, Bathurst had simply vanished into the night!

# NJAMIN BATHURS



THE no-nonsense Klitzing wasted no time in dilly-dallying. He confiscated Bathurst's carriage and baggage, put a guard on the White Swan, and transferred the valet and secretary to another Inn, forbidding them to leave town and stationing soldiers at their door. When dawn broke, the real hunt began.

After search parties had unsuccessfully scoured every corner of the town, every field, wood, bog, and ditch in the surrounding countryside, not forgetting the river bed, Klitzing sped to Berlin and got authority to handle the case. Back in Peleberg, he discovered Bathurst's valuable fur coat missing from his effects.

Three weeks after the Englishman's disappearance, two women gathering firewood came across a pair of trousers. They were badly stained, torn with two bullet holes—and they were Bathurst's. In one pocket was a water-sodden letter to his wife expressing fear of death and implying that the Comte d'Entraigues would be responsible.

Klitzing did not let up. The only other guests at the Inn that fateful night, two merchants who had departed shortly after the commotion started, were traced and exonerated. Then, during the exhaustive round up of all dubious characters, the missing coat was found in the house of a local thug.



AUGUSTUS SCHMIDT was well-known to the police, but his mother swore she had found the coat at the post-house, where Bathurst's secretary thought it had been left. Till the end, Klitzing suspected the disreputable Schmidt, who could produce no alibi, and he built up a substantial case against him.

With Bathurst's true identity known, many had other ideas. The Germans and the Austrians suspected the French. The British Press accused Napoleon. The French Press scoffed at British diplomats and rated Bathurst an imbecile. The British

Government, the Bathurst family, and Prince Frederick of Prussia offered rewards for the recovery of Bathurst's body.

Although formerly a French spy in London, d'Entraigues was ruled out. Perhaps the most extraordinary event in all the furore was Napoleon's personal assurance to Mrs. Bathurst that he had no hand in her husband's disappearance. To others he denied all knowledge of Bathurst until the outcry.

To this day, there are many theories about this unsolved mystery.

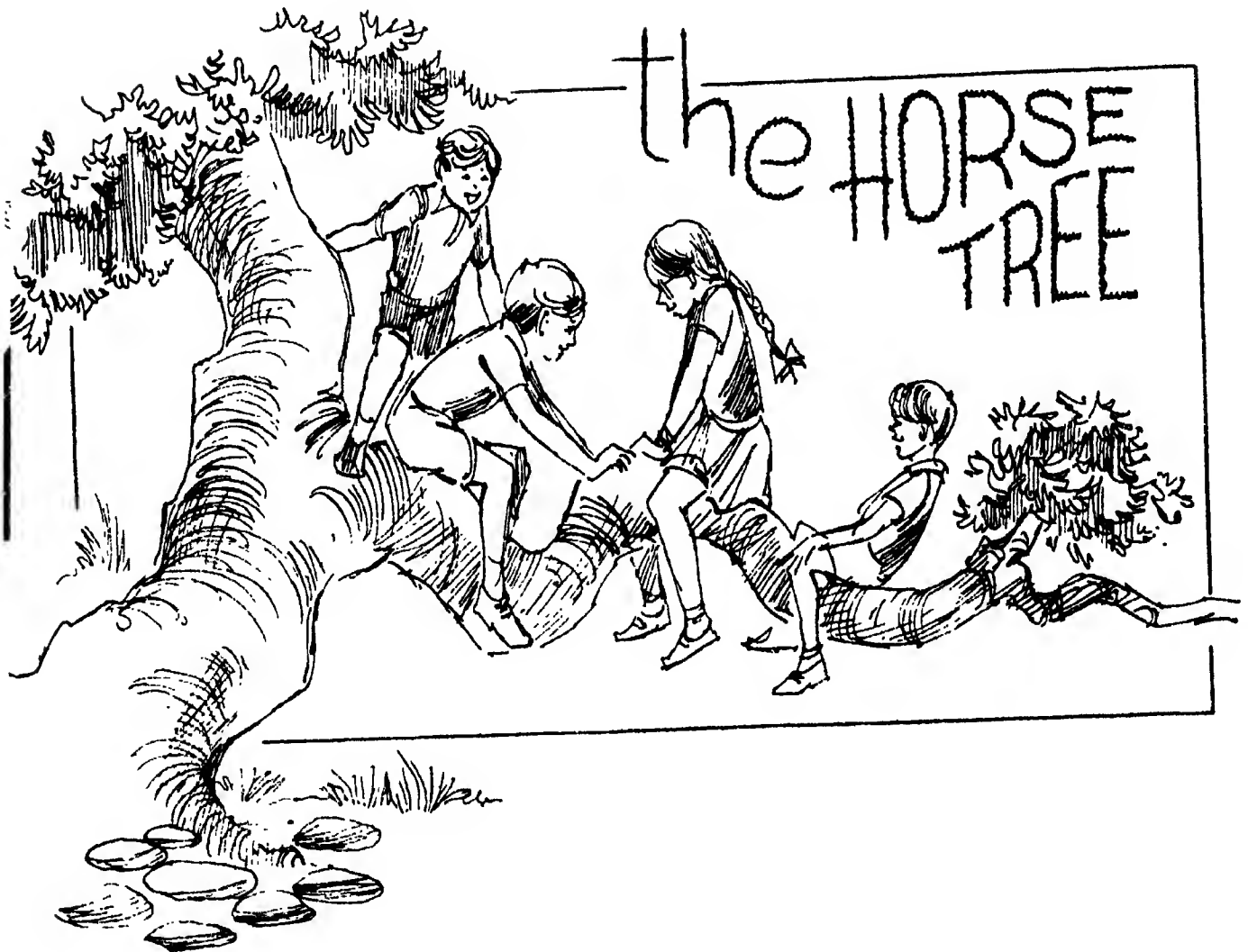
(Courtesy: BIS)

(Next month: Lord Kitchener)

*(This began as a dedication  
to a very old and very  
precious friend, but it has  
turned out to be a fairy  
tale, instead.... even  
better, because it's true !  
—M.P.S.)*

I THINK it was last April, or even earlier. We were walking down the Hill Road in the University Gardens—Roop, Anoop and Swaroop, Rajesh and Pamela, Ajay and Monica, Rahul and, of course, me. The soft yellow light of the leaving sun fell on the surrounding greenery, the music of birdsong filled the air, and we were—for the moment—at peace with the world. Instinctively, I looked toward the Horse-Tree area. There it was, in all its old and beautiful glory, spreading its arms to reach for the sky, smiling, as ever, benevolently at the world. My Horse-Tree. But ...what were all those bricks for? What was that old man doing?

I voiced my question, and my pals, not so concerned about the Horse-Tree but terribly curious anyway, suggested questioning the old man. Some made for the



Horse-Tree and, clambering on to the top, became mini-Hamlets (to ask or not to ask?). While my pals argued, I clung to the Horse-Tree, as I had clung, innumerable times before. I knew the outcome, anyway—they would send me to the old man, because I was the one who had wanted to know in the first place. I was right, of course, so I approached him. He was making 'chai' over a brick fire and did not seem to notice me.

"Baba," I began cautiously. He looked up, and he looked sour.

"Kya?" he asked.

"Baba," I said, "what are those bricks for?"

"Stadium," he muttered (to his tea, not me). "University Stadium."

I could see that I wouldn't get any more out of him and my friends, finding his lack of response very amusing, were giggling hysterically; so I made them jump off the tree (before the Baba, like the University gardeners, chased us with a stick), and we all went home.

A few days later, Roop and I were strolling in our compound. "Oh, Minnie," she said casually, "they're cutting down all those trees."

"What trees?" I asked idly. "They're always cutting down trees."

"You know," she said impatiently, "those ones. Near the thing."

Now, Roop is famous for her vague and ever-so-revealing statements, but years of experience has taught us all to read her mind. Putting nothing together I made four, and hazarded, "The Stadium?"

Roop beamed. "Yeah," she said, "all those trees around it."

My lethargy broke. "What??!!" I cried, stopping in my tracks and grabbing Roop violently. "Not the Horse-Tree? Who?? When???"

"H..Hey!" said Roop, half-laughing, protesting. "Take it easy! Those trees are being cut down to make for the new Stadium. So sad, eh?" she tried to look sad for a moment, but then she giggled. "Remember that old Baba and his chai?"

"Sad?!" I cried. "Tragic! Who ordered

it? I'll sue them! I'll..."

Roop plonked herself on the broken compound wall, and yawned.

"What can you do anyway? They're gonna wreck the whole Univ with their Stadiums. What can anybody do? I hope they at least build a swim-pool along with it."

"But, Roop!" I said, agonized. "The Horse-Tree!..."

But Roop was right. They were going to cut down all our trees, and nobody could do a thing about it.

That Sunday, I paced restlessly up and down my garden. The weather was beautiful, but for once I found no comfort in it. They were going to cut down my Horse-Tree! The thought was unbearable...finally, tired of pacing, I went to Bean, my brother.

"Bean," I said, "go Univ Gardens?"

"Yay!" cried Bean. "On my bike?"

"Sure," I said ('On his bike' meant *he* on his bike, since the size of his vehicle ensured my exclusion from it).

So we went to the Gardens, Bean racing madly ahead and me puffing frantically behind. Finally, we reached the University Cricket field, that glorious green expanse, where Bean ecstatically pedalled to freedom, and where I...well, I stopped, because there was my Horse-Tree.

That place was always a shrine, because it always stayed the same, no matter how different the world became. It stood on a hillock at the edge of the cricketfield, and all around it was long green grass. The Horse-Tree. The long, thick trunk that branched off like the back of a horse. All of us piled on it, and Anoop and Swaroop teasing me because I was short and fat and was sure to break the branch (Thank God, I never did). When we came to the University, I was nine, and since then I've changed, my friends have changed, the very world we all live in has changed...in a million different ways. But the Horse-Tree stayed the same, big and gentle, all down the way.

I've lost count of the times my friends and I have sat on and around the Horse-Tree...as ten-year-olds, as middle-school



schoolgirls, as high school monitors, even more recently—as University students. I remember how Anoop and Swaroop (Roop's two sisters) and Shefali (who was only six then!) and I formed a club—'The Secret Saturday and Sunday Scientists' the not-so-famous S.S.A.S.S.—and how we held our not-so-secret and not-so-scientific weekend meetings near the Horse-Tree (and how we told a peanut vendor that we were sisters and how he believed us...and, of course, how kicked we were about it). When Poonam and Dilip and the rest were with us, the Horse-Tree became a Kidnappers' Den or a Smugglers' Hideout—with poor Dilip inevitably the bad guy on the neighbouring tree. Bobby and Toby were there, too, in those days...and so was Gopal, whom I never forgave for calling me a gas balloon. And Sunita and Anil, and Picola and Tumpa...they all left within a year or two.

As we grew up, our old friendship broke and new ones took their place. The older we were, the more it hurt to say 'good-bye'. Dilip left when his dad was transferred, and Polly and Jai a little after him. Poonam and Pavan, and Upasana, Pappoo and Guniya, who had lived in the compound all their lives, had to go, too...so did Shefali, though she fortunately didn't move too far away. Even 'Kaki' and 'Kaka' left, leaving behind a comparatively empty verandah, and so did good old Yuslof, who kept tadpoles in his flower-pot in the good old days. The people who moved in after them were very, very nice, but you can't remove the sting of a 'good-bye' with a 'hello'.

In the meantime, we were changing in other ways, too...the three beautiful young women really are the freckled girls I played kidnappers with on the Horse-Tree, and the dashing fellow in a reckless green racer really the same, skinny Dilip whom we 'dhappa-ed' in Hide-and-Seek. School-time is over forever, and Anoop and Swaroop have gone far away to get their bachelor's degrees. Seetha, taller than ever, is learning the ins and outs of Political Science—a far cry from Aurangzeb in a stuffy six-standard class-room, eh?—and Roop is almost a full-fledged Economist. Tuni and

Tubby look so grown up in saris; Prabha—little, timid Prabha—is taller than me, and all the 'little ones' are in High School. Even Bean, who was just fifty days old when we came here, is going to be nine soon. Lop, a very special friend, moved to a place 5,000 miles away...and with these changes taking place all around me, I began to haunt the Horse-Tree more often...searching, perhaps, for the old times which would not return. It was hard to accept that the one thing I believed was forever would go, too.

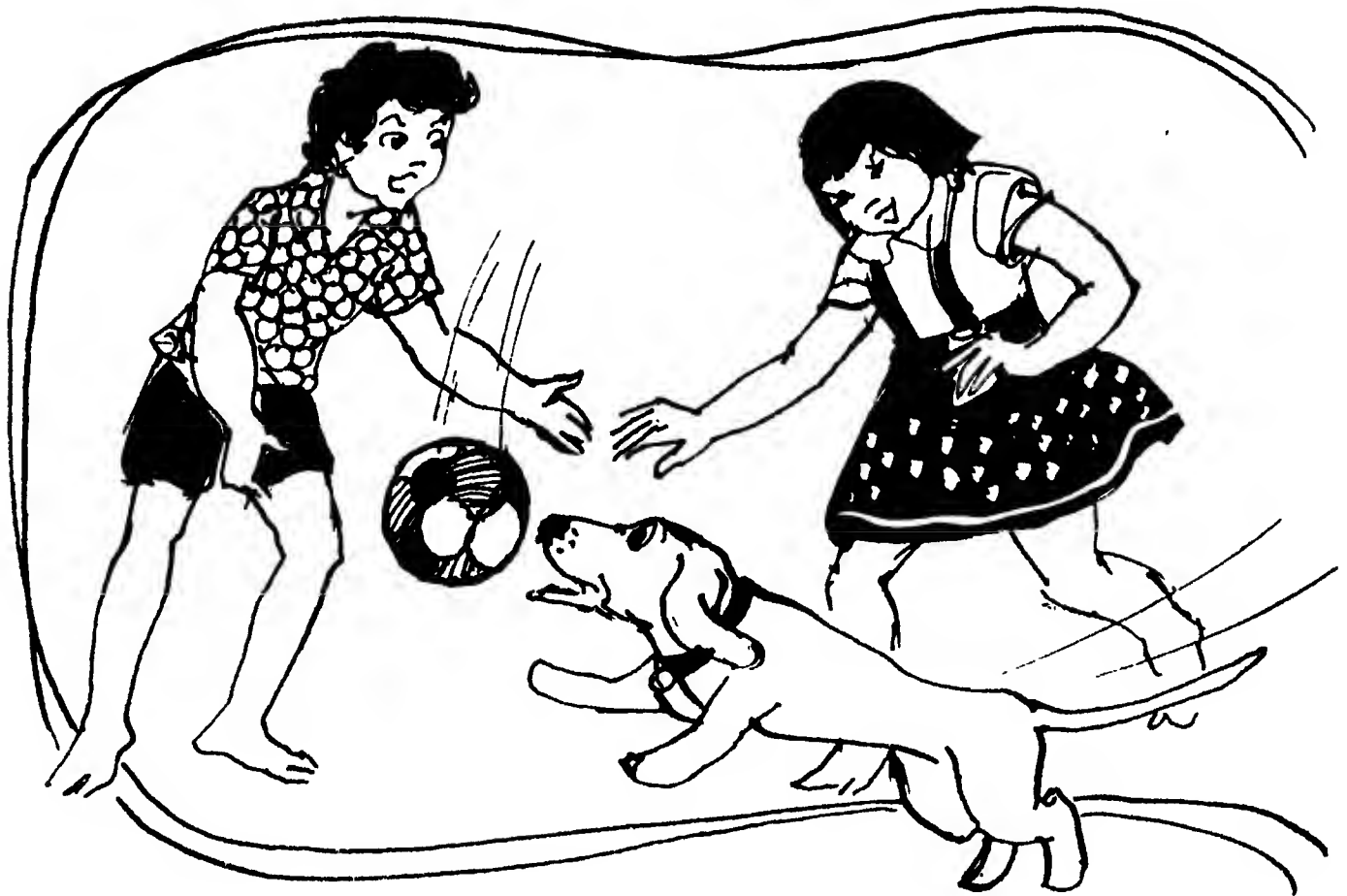
I leaned against the Horse-Tree, and all these memories came flooding back. My old, old pal, how could there ever be a world and *you* not in it? You stood for so many things...you weren't just a tree, but a symbol, a friend, a reminder, a castle full of memories and old, cherished dreams. No one really got so much from you as I did, Tree.

That summer, I wrote an essay on My Favourite Haunts—my Horse-Tree was in it, of course. I wrote letters to the Vice Chancellor and the Prime Minister, and I tore them up, because I couldn't explain why sentiments are more important than stadiums. I dreamed that I started a signature campaign against the chopping of trees to make way for stadiums, and the whole University signed it. Wishful thinking, said my Tree to me severely, will get you nowhere.

I spent a year of agony, while the Stadium came up, brick by brick. For four months, I did not have the courage to go look at what I was sure would be a stumpy remnant of my old friend. Finally, though, one day I was feeling particularly sentimental, and I decided to lay some flowers near where my Tree had been.

It happened then...the Miracle. My Horse-Tree was still there!!! Eleven trees just before it were gone, but NOT my Tree!!! I leave you to imagine how happy I was—and am. Life goes on, friends come and friends go...it happens to everyone, I suppose...but I'm glad my Horse-Tree is still here, to help me bear it.

*Minnie P. Swami*



**W**E call her Twiggy. She is quite a favourite of the family. Her absence is felt if she is silent even for a minute. And, yet, she gets on everyone's nerves when she makes a racket. She is fastidious about food and often walks off if she finds the meal uninteresting. Maybe she feels that it might harm her figure! She is very, very conscious of how she looks. For the past five years she has maintained herself very well. And that is exactly her age—five years. Yet, children of her own age are careful of staying away from her. She doesn't fancy playing with them, always. Everything depends on her mood. If she is very excited, she keeps running round and round in circles. But if she is glum, she just sits in one corner to day dream.

In spite of all her moods, she has become a part and parcel of the family. She is everyone's pet. The neighbourhood is also quite aware of Twiggy's existence. Her bark is louder than her bite. Her voice is so shrill that it would scare anyone off. Even the postman thinks she is someone to

# TWIGGY



be afraid of. By now, you must have guessed that our Twiggy is not just an ordinary dog, but a special member of our family, demanding equal, or even more, respect than all of us. When it is hot, she must also sit under a fan and when it is cold in winter she has her knitted coat to wear and her cosy box to sleep in, padded with an old blanket. She cannot bear to sit on the floor, but must nuzzle up on the carpet, preferably on someone's feet. When there is a party, she also has her special feast of bones.

Twiggy is very fond of our company and is most protective towards the babies of the house. She does not mind if they decide even to lie on her or put their hands in her mouth. But she is not so lenient with the elders. If by mistake we step on her little toe or collide with her unknowingly, she gives out one yell or snaps at you. And then she sulks for some time in a little corner.

Twiggy is also very fond of outdoor games, which include chasing a ball three times the size of its mouth, splashing about in the garden when the 'mali' is watering the lawns, and running round and round trying to catch its own tail. She doesn't mind a joyride in the car, once a while. If everyone is being treated to ice-creams, Twiggy *must* have the last bite off someone's share!

When Twiggy is good, she is very, very good. And when she is bad, she is horrid! When she keeps on barking for no reason at all and is asked not to do so, she shifts further away to another place and barks even louder. When she is asked to come indoors, especially when she is not to go along with us, she wags her tail and slinks nearer the car. And then, Mama's loud and commanding voice penetrates through her mind. "Twiggy, get *in*!" In a jiffy, Twiggy is indoor and under the sofa, for fear of being spanked. On days she has misbehaved, she is also not given any food, but she dare not demand any because she knows she is wrong. No amount of coaxing from the children will make Mama relent to give her food. On such occasions, Mama's word is law! And Twiggy is human enough to know it.

Twiggy always gives the impression of being a brave and bold animal, in spite of her size. She is a tiny brown Dachshund. It is her loud bark that does the trick. Any visitor to the house is welcomed with her loud barking. They may take it as a form of greeting or get scared and rush out, till one of us asks Twiggy to shut up. But when it comes to choosing companions of her own class and breed (dogs!), Twiggy has very little sense. Maybe, she has become more of a human! She decides to hobnob with the huge stray dogs who are masters of their territory and do not like a little mite of a dog wandering in their region. They just have to growl angrily, and our Twiggy charges down the road at lightning speed, till she is safely under a sofa! She doesn't even bother to see if the other dog is chasing her. And for that day, Twiggy's outing is over. The smart alsatians or the elegant but snappy pomeranians that walk by our road are also not very friendly towards Twiggy. Maybe, they don't fancy Twiggy going up so close to them and sniffing at them and licking them.

It happened on Diwali day. Twiggy had sensed that something awful was going to take place. She had seen the children's excitement, as their pile of crackers and fireworks was increasing. Twiggy hated crackers, which meant she hated Diwali. She scurried around the house the whole day, not even touching her food. She also felt a bit neglected because everyone was busy with their own work. She was shooed out of the kitchen since she came in everyone's way, and the children also didn't like her nosing around when they were so busy. Poor Twiggy.

Many of our family friends spend Diwali evening with us. The more the merrier was the motto of the day. Mama knew that Twiggy was unhappy. But if she tied her up in a room, Twiggy would feel even more humiliated.

The candles were lit and the children had been given the 'go' signal to start on their fireworks. Twiggy vanished from the scene of excitement. She couldn't understand what was so nice about the atrocious sounds. Even the babies of the house had

ditched her. She sat in the dark bedroom, tense and horrified. She thought she would be quite safe in this room. Every minute of noise that went by seemed like an hour. But her peace of mind was shattered when a rocket firework came and hit the window with a big bang! Twiggy was wholly unnerved. She ran out of the room trembling with fear. The noise outside was even louder. So, she ran to the kitchen and finding the backdoor open, she ran out into the dark.

That was the last we had seen of Twiggy that day. When all the merrymaking was over and a good meal had been eaten, the children called Twiggy for her food. But their shouts were unanswered. They ran round the house calling out to her. They thought that she must be hiding somewhere with fear. But Twiggy was not to be traced.

A search party was organised and everyone set out in different directions in the colony. Twiggy's name echoed all around. But no sign of Twiggy. She was lost! Poor Twiggy. Where was she? What would she eat? Where would she sleep? What would she do if some big dogs attacked her? The search continued till midnight. And after that, all hopes of finding her were lost. The sounds of crackers in the neighbourhood died low and yet Twiggy did not return.

Everyone went to bed with a heavy heart. Some members of our family even began weeping. But it was futile. Throughout the night, we were haunted by the sound of Twiggy's whimpering. So often did we open the doors and peer out, but Twiggy was nowhere around.

Around five-thirty next morning, Mama opened the main door to pick up the newspapers. And lo—there sat Twiggy right outside the door, whimpering and wagging her tail, with her one ear up and one ear down, waiting to be led indoors.

Twiggy was home! And that was all that mattered.

*Alaka Shankar*

## THE GREEN-EYED GHOST

**M**Y PARENTS and my elder brother had gone to the movies, and I was left all alone in the house, with my puppy to keep me company.

It was a dark night, and it had been raining for quite some time. The street lights looked quite dull in the fog. I was lying on my bed reading 'GHOST STORIES' when, suddenly, the lights went off. I felt very frightened. Naturally, one cannot but feel nervous when all the ghosts in the stories come flooding into the mind as soon as the lights go off.

I felt scared and switched on my torch to get hold of my puppy in whose company I would feel better; but to my surprise I found that he was nowhere to be seen. I looked at the table by the open window, and saw his footprints on the white table cloth. Then I realised that he had gone out through the window. I decided to go and look for him.

I put on my raincoat and took my torch. I knew that he would have gone to his favourite place—the woods. So, I went towards the woods off and on switching on my torch. The tall trees looked menacing. The owls did not put one in a joyous mood either. I kept moving ahead in spite of the chirping of the crickets and the hooting of the owls. Apart from these sounds, the night was a-b-s-o-l-u-t-e-l-y quiet.

I was deep in the woods when, suddenly, an owl gave a blood-curdling screech. I nearly jumped out of my skin (fortunately I have a tough hide), and I dropped my torch. I had just found it when I heard a twig crack behind me. When I flashed my torch in that direction, I saw a pair of green eyes gleaming behind a bush. I was startled out of my wits and started running as fast as my legs could carry me.

I could hear it breathing heavily, running right behind me. It was closing in on me. As I stepped into the verandah of my house, it pounced on my back. I shrieked in terror, and the lights suddenly flooded the house. Emboldened by the lights, I glanced back and then burst out laughing. The 'green-eyed ghost' was none other than my puppy.

*Upsham Goel (13)  
India*



A FOLK TALE FROM KASHMIR

# Rani and Madan

**H**UNDREDS of years ago, amidst the beautiful hills of Kashmir there lived a little girl called Rani and her younger brother, Madan. They lived with their mother in a little cottage overlooking a small orchard. They had inherited the orchard from their father when he died a few years earlier.

From morning till evening, Rani helped her mother at the orchard. There was always a lot of work, like tending the trees, plucking the fruits, loading them in the carts, and sending them to the market.

Madan was too young to be of much help, but he loved his sister dearly; so he followed her about trying to help. While she worked, Rani would sing songs and tell him tales of distant lands. They laughed and played a good deal and

were very happy. Rani never cried or complained when her little brother pulled her hair or gave her pain without meaning it. In fact, she would even hide him when he had been naughty and had angered his mother.

Rani grew up to be as beautiful as she was kind and generous. Madan never forgot how lovely his sister looked when she sang and danced by the fireside, to cheer him up on cold winter nights.

One day, Rani saw a large crowd of people on the road, chattering excitedly.

"Is it true that the Rajput prince is going back to his state today?" said one.

"Yes, Prince Indrajeet from Mewar had been the royal guest of our king for many days now," said another.

"He is sure to pass this way," said a third.

"It seems he has been roaming about the country for a year but hasn't yet found a girl beautiful enough to be his bride," added another.

Suddenly, an excited murmur went through the crowd. "There comes the prince! There he is!" Everyone craned his neck to get a better view of the glittering procession. At the centre rode the noble prince on a magnificent black horse. He looked proud and imposing, resplendent in clothes of brilliant hues and a dazzling bejewelled turban on his head.

The prince suddenly saw Rani in the crowd and stopped. The procession also came to a halt. He had never before set eyes on such an exquisitely beautiful creature. Her hair was as dark as the wings of the raven, her cheeks as red as the apples in her orchard, and lips as pink as a rosebud. For a moment, he thought that she was not human but an apparition.

The prince felt enchanted that at last he had found a girl who had the beauty, grace, and bearing of a queen.

Rani's mother was delighted when the prince asked for her daughter's hand in marriage. She was sad, too, as Rani would be going far, far away from home.

Months and years passed, but Rani never came back. Madan grew up to be a strong and brave boy. He missed his sister very much. He would often see his mother cry for Rani. One day, he decided that he would himself go and seek his sister. "Perhaps she is in trouble, that is why she has not come to see us for so many years," he told his mother.

So, after advising his mother to be very careful and to look after herself well, Madan set out to find his sister.

After much hardship and many adventures, he reached Mewar, in Rajputana. However, when he expressed his wish to meet the queen, the guard gave the weary and dust-laden Madan a disdainful look. When Madan told him that he wanted to meet King Indrajeet who was his brother-in-law, the guard laughed outright. "If I put you in prison, you will meet him soon enough," he said threateningly.

Madan went away feeling disappointed and disturbed. That night, he scaled the walls and got inside the palace. He moved as silently as a cat. At last, he found the queen's bedroom. He saw his sister sleeping on a large silver bed. In the soft light of the brass lamps, he saw the glittering jewellery on her neck, ears, and arms. She looked every inch a queen. When Madan bent down to take a closer view, he saw that her face looked very sad. Her eyelashes were wet — as though she had cried herself to sleep.

"Nani!" he whispered. That was how he used to call her when he was a child and could not pronounce 'Rani'.

Rani sat up startled. "Who called me by that name?" she said, looking around wildly. Soon her eyes fell on Madan. Though Madan was now a big boy, his facecut had not changed much. He still looked the same and wore his silver amulet around his neck. "I must be dreaming," she said, rubbing her eyes. "It can't be my dear brother."

"Oh, Nani, it is me, your Madan," he said. "Say you haven't forgotten me!"

Rani ran to hug her brother. She was laughing and crying at the same time.

She asked him many questions about their mother and their home, and their orchard. When Madan asked her why she had never been to see them and told her how sad their mother had been, Rani became silent and her eyes filled with tears. She told him of her misfortunes.

It had all begun when Indrajeet came to the throne after his father's death. He was a good and just king, and his subjects loved him but the king's prime minister, Laxman Singh, on whom the king relied a lot, had turned traitor. One by one Laxman Singh removed the king's loyal supporters. He brought false charges even against the king's

own uncle and the old man had to leave the kingdom. Laxman Singh then filled the palace with his own minions. One night, Laxman Singh made a surprise attack and overpowered the king. After throwing Indrajeet into prison, the wily Laxman Singh had become the king.

"Not satisfied with all this, he is forcing me to marry him! The palace is guarded day and night and I am not allowed to go anywhere," Rani concluded between sobs.

Madan thought for a while and got a wonderful idea. "You told me just now that Indrajeet had many loyal supporters. Can you give me the names of any of them?" he asked Rani.

She told him that Indrajeet's old uncle had built for himself a hut in the forest and was living like a hermit. "I am sure he will help me," said Madan, jumping up.

So they made their plans, and by the time Madan left the palace, it was almost morning and the birds had begun to twitter in the trees.

The next day, the royal drummer went round announcing that the queen had agreed to marry King Laxman Singh on the next full moon night. That day, the gates of the palace would be thrown open and all the subjects, who wished to pay their respects to the queen, could do so.

In the meantime, Madan with the help of the old uncle had got together all the loyal supporters of Indrajeet. The common people of the kingdom hated Laxman Singh and wanted their old king to return to power. They gave all their help to Madan.

On the day of the wedding, Madan, along with a band of faithful soldiers, trooped into the palace in twos and threes all dressed as peasants. They hid their weapons under their colourful clothes. Before long, they had surrounded the palace. At just one signal from their chief, the brave soldiers overpowered Laxman Singh's men and before Laxman Singh knew what was happening, he had been made captive and King Indrajeet released amidst wild rejoicing.

The grateful king requested Madan to become his new prime minister. But Madan had one more important duty to perform before he would accept the office of the prime minister. After promising to return soon, he set off for Kashmir to fetch his beloved mother.

*Rupa Gupta*

*(Courtesy: Writers Workshop)*

## TOWARDS A HAPPY CHILDHOOD

**A**PRIL comes, and it is time for summer once again—in most parts of the world, at least in the eastern hemisphere.

SUMMER is the season of school vacation and, therefore, children's favourite season. They spend a wonderful time, weaving around them a dream-world and leisurely giving it shape and colours, prompted by their imagination.

LIFE is no more confined to any set patterns—of home, of school, or of the playground. But patterns have their own advantages. They will not allow you to go astray.

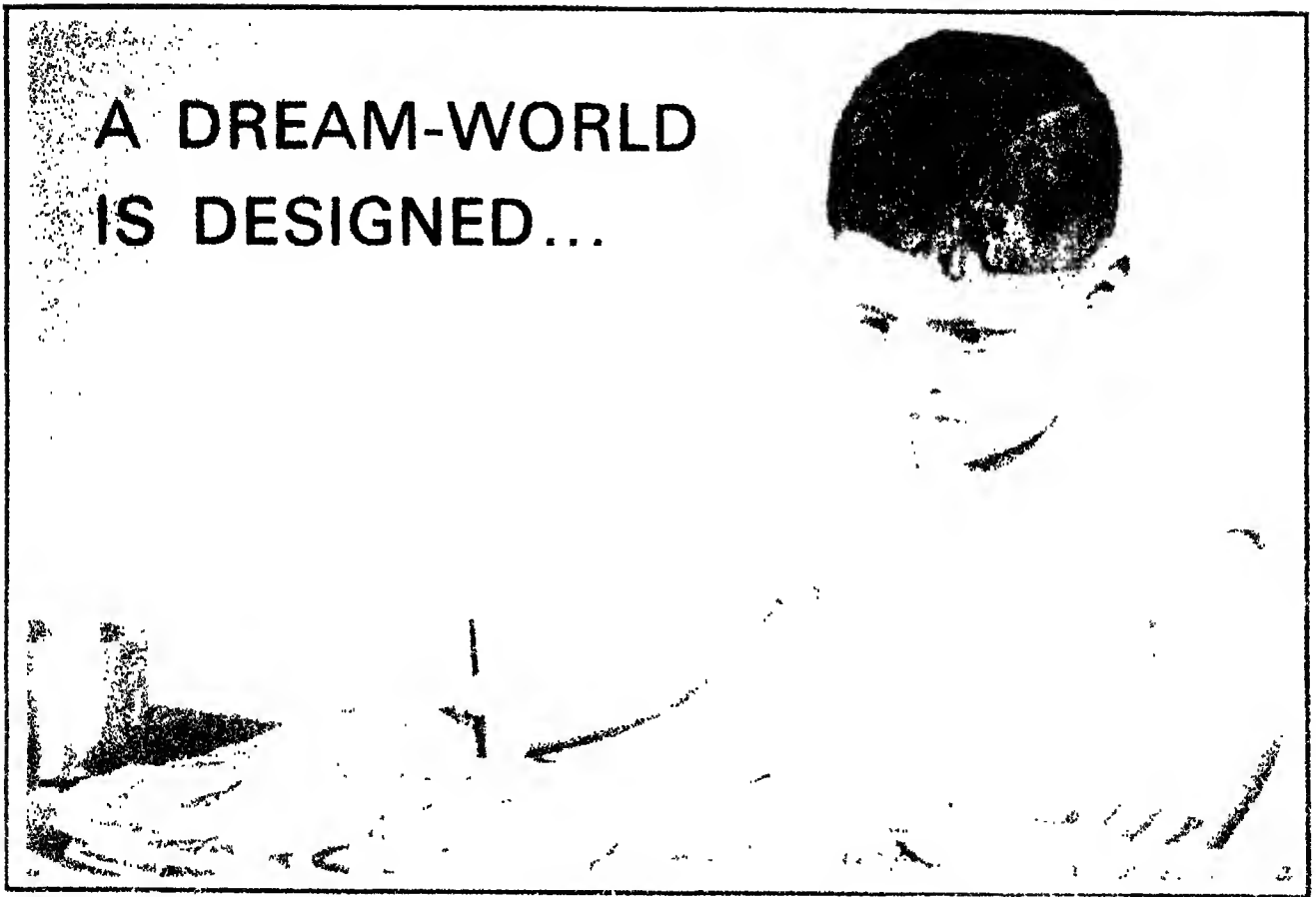
SUMMER means sunshine. It brightens everybody's heart. Isn't sunshine synonymous with happiness?

HAPPY childhood leads to a peaceful world. There is no place for quarrels, rivalry, fighting in such a world. Its foundations are ever strengthened by friendship. The message of goodwill goes round: "Let children be blessed with loving parents and a loving motherland. Let them know no hunger or poverty. Let the childhood be happy, and it will then be a better world, and more just."

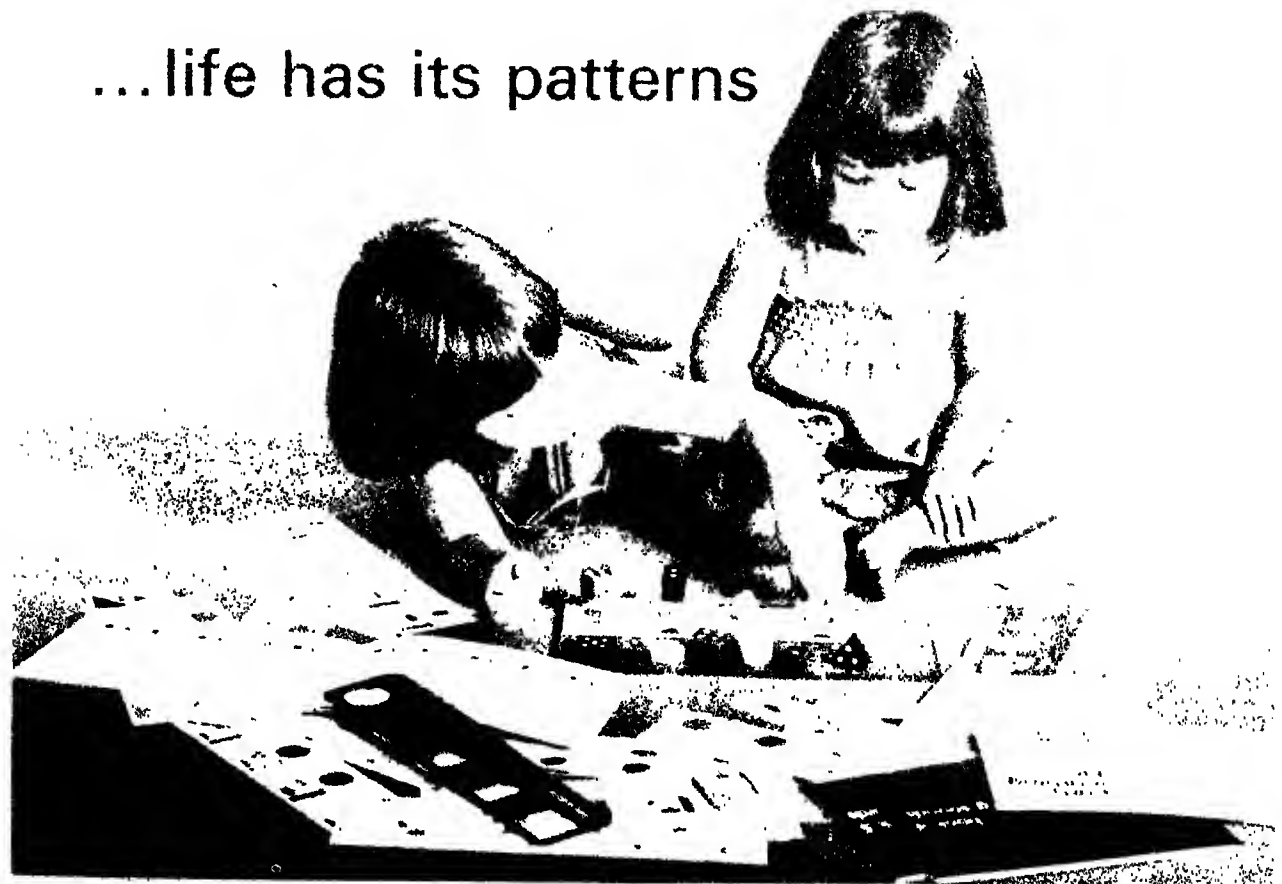
SKY is no limit for children's aspirations; and their achievements always soar above them.

*(See photo-feature on the following pages)*

A DREAM-WORLD  
IS DESIGNED...

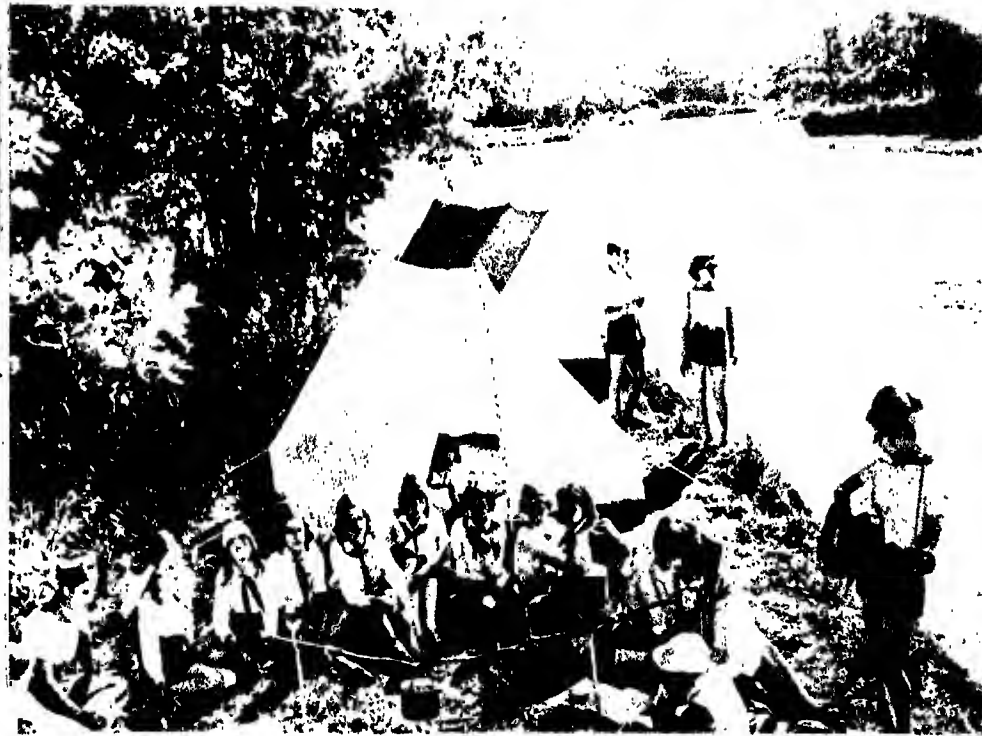


...life has its patterns





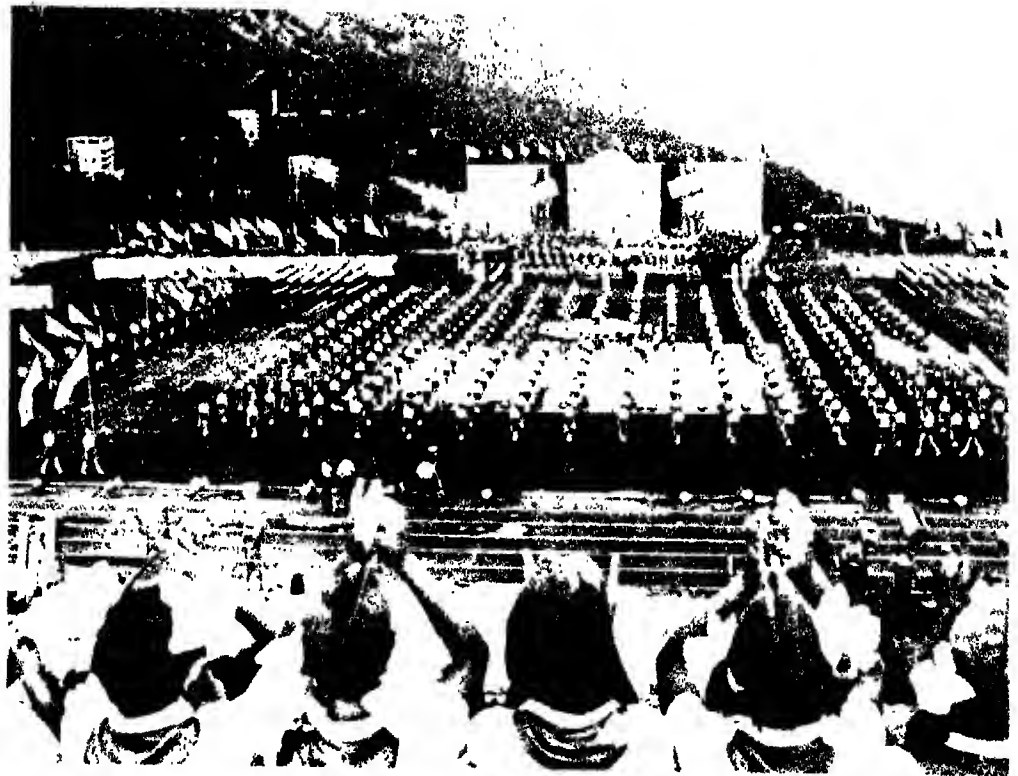
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*"May  
there  
always  
be  
sunshine  
and  
joy"*



*"May  
there  
always  
be  
peace  
and  
friendship"*



USSR Information Department





Aspirations are voiced  
Achievements are praised



**B**RIGHT and early one morning, Red Wheels and Bunttoo went driving along their road. Red Wheels was beeping with gusto, as he felt so full of joy though at nothing in particular. When they reached their neighbours' gate, Red Wheels stopped and Bunttoo leaned out.

"Good morning!" he called out.

Their friends—the little boy Dhun and his Sidney-silkie, Birbal, came running out to greet them. "Hello, Bunttoo! Hello, Red Wheels!"

"Want to come along for a drive?" asked Bunttoo.

sick of maths and history and geography."

Grandpa Berry said, "All good little boys go to school. You're the baddest little boy I ever knew. And you, Birbal, are the baddest little dog I ever knew...."

Birbal gave an annoyed bark. He didn't like being called a bad little dog, least of all, the baddest little dog anybody ever knew.

What did they know of the jolly time he and Dhun had, anyway. Their 'chase' and 'hide-and-seek' and other games, all their picnics, and little parties in the garden. No, he too didn't like it when Dhun went to school because then he, Birbal, had to stay



Just then, Grandpa Berry—Dhun's grandfather—appeared round the corner, puffing like a steam-engine in a hurry. "Stop!" he cried. Dhun and Birbal scowled when they saw him.

Grandpa Berry waved his hands around. "Don't take them along! They've been very, very naughty."

Dhun and Birbal scowled even more.

"What have they done, grandpa?" asked Bunttoo.

Grandpa Berry rolled his eyes. "They've been having such fun all vacation that Dhun doesn't want to go back to school! Isn't it disgraceful?"

Dhun pouted. "School's so boring. I'm

home and get very bored with himself. What a pity they didn't allow dogs to go to school with their little human friends!

Now, they all stood and glared at one another. Then, Red Wheels suddenly spoke up. "Oh, please let them come with us. Just for a short drive."

Grandpa Berry shook his head. "Certainly not."

"Pleecease," begged Dhun. "Please, grandpa, just this once."

"NO!" roared Grandpa Berry. "And don't go around, trying to melt my heart!"

Birbal even sat up and begged, in the way he asked for his doggie-biscuits. But Grandpa Berry just stood with his arms

akimbo and looked very stern and un-meltable, indeed. Dhun and Birbal looked at each other and shrugged. Red Wheels and Buntoo looked at each other.

"Well?" said Buntoo.

Red Wheels beckoned to him. Buntoo bent low to listen to what Red Wheels had to say. Then, a slow smile spread over Buntoo's face and he nodded.

Grandpa Berry still looked very stern as he stood there and wondered what they were up to. Then Buntoo stretched out to Grandpa Berry and whispered something in his ear.

In an instant, Grandpa Berry melted. His arms flew down to his sides and a broad beam broke out on to his face.

"That's a wonderful idea," he grunted. "Now, why didn't I think of that, before?"

Red Wheels purred with pleasure. To think that it was his idea. . . . .

Buntoo waved to Dhun and Birbal. "All right, pile in, we will all go for a drive."

Dhun and Birbal screamed with joy and threw themselves at Grandpa Berry. "Thank you, dear grandpa, for letting us go."

Then the four of them drove away, waving to Grandpa Berry, who waved back with a very mischievous grin.



"Where are we going?" cried Dhun as Red Wheels ran along, beep-beeping.

"Wait and see," said Buntoo with a wink.

Birbal was very excited. He gave a shrill bark everytime Red Wheels beeped, and Red Wheels would beep everytime Birbal barked, and you can quite imagine what a racket they made together!

They made such a racket that some of the birds on the trees down the road came flying down to perch on Red Wheels' top. And Birbal barked all the more because, after all, he was a dog and it was his business to bark at birds. And when Birbal barked, they all screeched, because they thought it was none of his business what they did. They all made such a noise that nobody could hear themselves think!

Finally, Buntoo yelled. "Quiet, everybody. That's enough!" But nobody heard him.

"Where are we going?" screamed Dhun from the back-seat into Buntoo's car, so loudly that Buntoo's head reeled. And Red Wheels ran right around in a circle and back on the road again.

"This is a mad-house!" cried Buntoo.

"But where are we going?" cried Dhun again, impatiently.

"Wait and see," said Buntoo again.

They ran on and on, birds and all, until they came to a large gate over which hung a large signboard: 'SCHOOL'

Dhun took one look and roared in anger. "No. . . . No. . . . I won't go to school. . . . How mean of you all! If I knew what your wicked plan was, I wouldn't have come. I'm going home. Come, Birbal, let's go home. . . ."

"No," said Buntoo. "You'll do nothing of the sort. And do you know what? We're all going to school with you today. Now, how would you like that?"

Dhun began to beam. "Really? You mean. . . . all of us. . . . you and Red Wheels and Birbal, too."

Buntoo nodded. "Yippee!" cried Dhun, clapping his hands. Birbal barked and Red Wheels beeped and hopped around and the birds screeched—so much that all the children in the school came running out to see what the matter was. And all their teachers came running after them.

And everybody was so surprised to behold this strange circus-like sight. This quaint little green car with red wheels, with his friends Buntoo and Dhun inside and Birbal, who was half hanging out, still barking at the birds on the roof. It was such a funny sight that they all came crowding up to them and began to roar with laughter.

"Oh! This is the most pleasant morning I've ever had," exclaimed the headmistress wiping her spectacles.

All the teachers and children trooped back to their classes. Buntoo spoke to the headmistress and she agreed to let them all attend classes—just this once.

So, for the rest of the morning, Red Wheels sat and learnt to count. Birbal learnt all about animals and birds and thought very longingly of chasing them, one day. Buntoo learnt up yards and yards of poetry and Dhun did a bit of maths and a bit of history and a bit of geography. And, for the first time, he didn't feel bored, at all.

And all the birds who had travelled with

them decided to visit all their relatives who lived on the trees around the school. They were so overjoyed that they all chattered endlessly and disturbed the children in their classes. When school was over for the day, they all crowded out to wave 'good-bye' to the four friends. "Come back again!" cried the children.

"We will," they all cried back.

Dhun smiled, happily. "I didn't know school could be such fun. Now I think I'll come back everyday."

Birbal sulked, "What will I do all alone at home?"

Buntoo said, "You could always come and play with Red Wheels..."

Red Wheels beamed and Birbal brightened up at once.

They all drove back home again. Red Wheels beep-beeped and Birbal barked, and the birds on the roof chattered and screeched.

"Oh! What a madhouse!" said Buntoo.

*Padmini Rao*

## ANIMAL WORLD



**T**HERE was a large kingdom at the edge of the cold sea, ruled by an old king and his queen. They had a beautiful daughter, born many years after their marriage. They loved her dearly.

But, alas, as the young princess became old enough to get married, the king and queen were sad because she would then have to leave them. The princess also seemed to be in no hurry to get married.

The king was very fond of rabbits and reared silver rabbits in his palace. Not one or two, but three hundred. The king fondled them and played with them whenever he was tired.

One day, the king had a very bright idea. He sent word throughout his kingdom that whoever could take his rabbits out to graze for three days running without losing a single one of them would win the princess's hand in marriage. If he failed to do so, he would receive as many blows with a birch as the number of rabbits lost. The king was quite certain that some rabbits would surely get lost and he wouldn't then have to part with his daughter.

At the foot of the mountains, not far from the royal palace, there lived a farmer and his three sons. The two elder sons were stout and strong but very ill-mannered and lazy. The youngest called Esben was short in size but was very hard working and kind-hearted. When they heard about the king's test to win the hand of the princess, the eldest brother decided to try his luck.

The farmer sent him happily, because he had

found him useless at his farm. Maybe if he passed the test, he would become a rich man and would not have to work for the rest of his life. So, he got him a new suit stitched and gave him a loaf of bread and some meat, and a horse. He rode off quite confident that he would win his bride.

But on the way, he got lost in the dense forest. As he roamed about, trying to find his way out, he came upon an old coalman and rudely asked him the way. The coalman humbly led him to the right path and in return asked him for some food as he had been starving for days.

"That's your fault, for not working hard. The food I have is just enough for me," the young man said nastily.

"Young man, you are unkind, or else I would have advised you properly," the old man said.

The young man laughed at him and rode off.

The king was surprised that a young farmer was trying to win the hand of the princess.

"Go ahead, by all means," he said, "but also remember the punishment if you lose even one of them."

"It's worth the effort, looking after the rabbits, if it means winning the hand of the princess," thought the lazy youth.

But when he took them to pasture, no matter what he tried, the rabbits pelted in all directions. The king was so furious to see only a few rabbits returning home that he ordered his guards to give him fifty lashes on his back with the birch, to punish him for his vanity.

He was then thrown on his horse which trotted all the way back to his master's farm.

"Don't tell me you turned black and blue all over just by tending the rabbits!" laughed the younger brother.

"Let me see how *you* fare," his father rejoined. The second son also dressed himself in a new suit and carrying some food and drink, he set off on the horse to the king's palace.

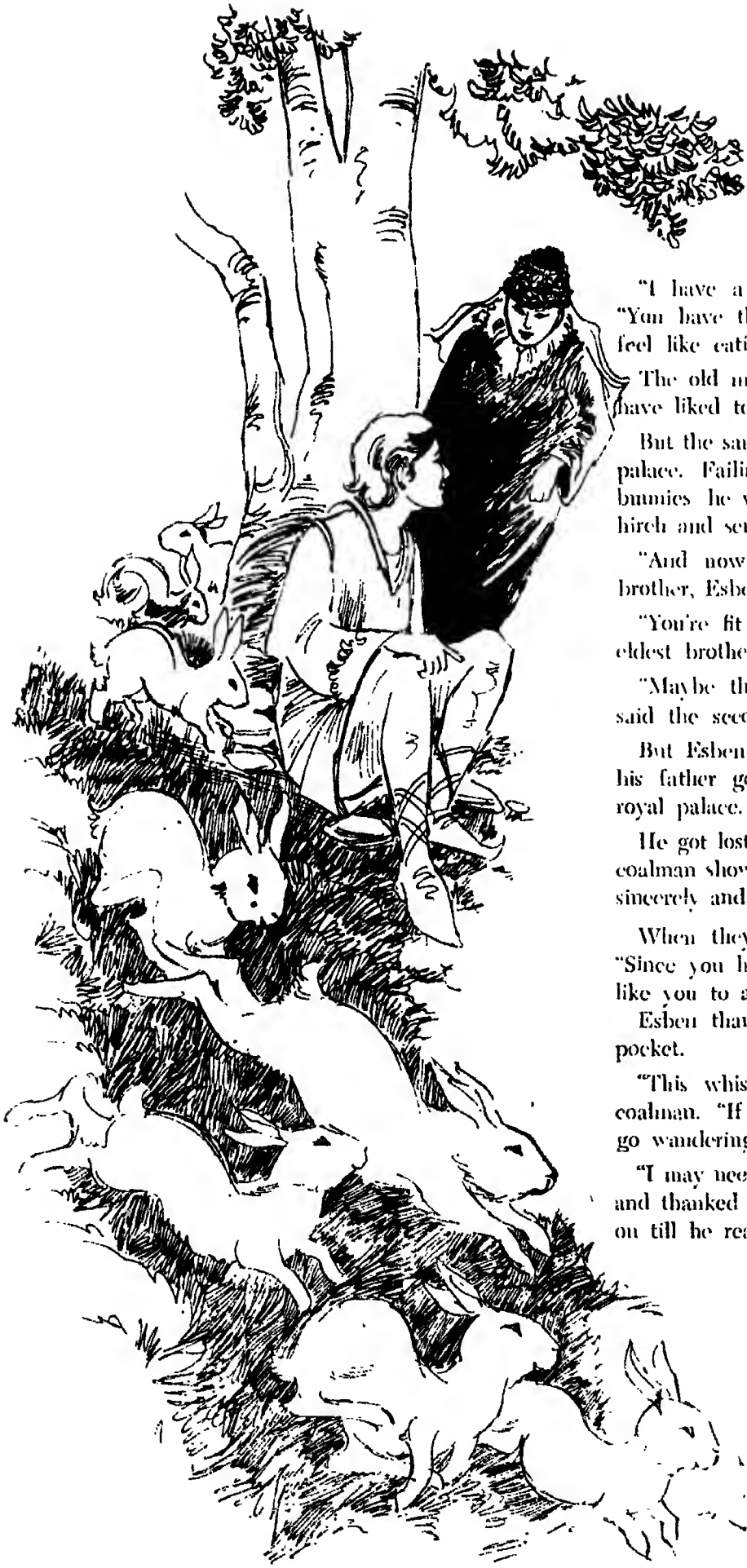
"I hope he has better luck," thought the father, wanting to get rid of at least one lazy son.

The second son also got lost in the forest and met the same coalman who showed him the way to the palace.

"Can you give me something to eat?" the coalman asked him hesitantly. "Though I have only one tooth, I would like to bite into something."

## A SWEDISH TALE

# The King's Rabbits



"I have a better idea," said the second son. "You have that tooth pulled out and you won't feel like eating at all!" He then went along.

The old man shook his head sadly. He would have liked to advise this youth.

But the same fate awaited the second son at the palace. Failing to bring back even half the silver bunnies he was lashed a hundred times with the birch and sent off on his horse.

"And now it is *my* turn," said the youngest brother, Esben, and he got ready for his journey.

"You're fit to sit by the fireside," mocked his eldest brother.

"Maybe the princess is just waiting for him!" said the second.

But Esben paid no heed to them and wishing his father good-bye, he walked off towards the royal palace.

He got lost in the deep forest and the same old coalman showed him the way. Esben thanked him sincerely and asked him to share his meagre meal.

When they had eaten all, the old man said, "Since you have been very kind to me, I would like you to accept this whistle as a token gift."

Esben thanked him and kept it safely in his pocket.

"This whistle is not ordinary," explained the coalman. "If you blow it, all living creatures that go wandering will come scuttering back."

"I may need it very soon," cried Esben excitedly and thanked the old man again. He then walked on till he reached the palace.

He approached the king and humbly asked him if he could take the silver rabbits for grazing. The king was surprised to see a frail young man asking his permission, but he was impressed by his manners, and gave him consent.

"Do you know the punishment that awaits you?" the king asked the youth worriedly, because he did not want to see him suffer.

But Esben was quite confident and when he saw the beautiful princess staring at him, he was even more determined to try his luck.

So, early next morning, he took the three hundred silver bunnies out to graze. He told them to scatter around and graze but also warned them to stay nearby so that they could hear his whistle. They obeyed as though they had understood him!

The princess, who had liked the youth at first sight, decided to follow him. She dressed up like a shepherd boy and rode far behind on a mule. But in spite her disguise, Esben had recognised her.

The princess approached Esben and said, "Please give me a silver rabbit. The king won't even notice. I will pay you three gold coins for it."

"All right," Esben agreed readily. "But you have to hug me tightly before you can take it."

The princess found this a strange request, for surely the youth hadn't recognised her? But she did as he had asked, and Esben also kept his promise. The princess set off with a silver rabbit in her basket, feeling very pleased with herself. But no sooner had she reached the palace gates and turned round to look at the silver rabbit in the basket, than she found that it had vanished. That was because Esben had blown the magic whistle and the rabbit had scurried back.

Just before sunset, Esben again blew the magic whistle and all the silver rabbits gathered and formed a line. And singing a merry tune, Esben led them to the king. The king was most amazed to find not one single rabbit missing. As soon as word spread around, people came to see the humble shepherd who had taken them all by surprise.

But the king would not be beaten so easily. The next day, after Esben had taken the silver rabbits out in the meadows, he called his daughter and asked her to dress up as an old farmer and offer Esben even one hundred gold coins if he would part with one rabbit. The princess wanted to get one up on Esben, because he had already cheated her the first day.

Dressed as an old farmer, she drove down to Esben in a cart, and begged him to give her a silver rabbit for a hundred pieces of gold.

"I won't sell my rabbits," Esben refused her. "But if you want one, dear farmer, I can exchange him for three kisses."

The princess was quite sure he had not recognised her and agreed to his deal. This time, she tied up the silver rabbit in a sack and drove back to the castle. But again the magic whistle had drawn the rabbit back to Esben. Secretly, the princess was happy that she had lost, because she had taken a fancy for the young farmer.

The king was most furious when Esben returned with all the rabbits a second time. The next day, which was the last day of test, the king himself decided to disguise himself — in the clothes of an old hag. He rode on an old mare and reached the meadow, where Esben was tending the rabbits.

"Please give me a silver rabbit," he pleaded. "I'll pay you well for it."

Esben relented after a long time, and it was only in exchange for something worse — the old hag had to kiss his mare three times! The king had to agree or else he would lose his daughter that same evening. He was quite confident that he would win.

So he kissed his mare thrice, picked the silver rabbit, and putting him in a wooden box, nailed it down from all sides. Once he reached the palace gates, he ran to his cellar, and after discarding his costume, carefully opened the wooden box. But to his horror, the bunny was missing. It had been Esben again who had whistled just in time.

That evening, when the entire lot of three hundred silver rabbits has been restored to their royal owner, Esben bowed to the king and said, "Your Majesty, I have fulfilled the task you had set for me. I now ask for the hand of your beautiful daughter."

The princess was most delighted, but not so the king.

He said, "I admire you young man, but I have one more test for you. In the cellar there is an empty barrel. I want you to fill it with truth."

The queen thought the king was being very harsh. The princess was also unhappy. But Esben was not perturbed. He ordered the barrel to be brought in court and said, "On, my first day of test, a young shepherd tried to get away with one

rabbit in exchange for a hug. The shepherd was none other than the princess. Is that the truth?" The princess looked down bashfully and admitted that it was.

The king was getting quite angry.

Esben continued, "The next day, an old farmer was sent by the king to take a rabbit from me for a hundred golden coins. I agreed to part with the rabbit for three kisses. I got the rabbit back with my magic whistle. The old farmer was again our princess. Is it the truth?"

The king had started sweating with anger and cursed the young farmer under his breath.

Esben said further, "The third day, that is today, an old hag came to take one rabbit from me in exchange for . . ."

"All right, that is enough," the king stopped him. For he would be the next culprit and he did not want his subjects to know that he had kissed an old mare thrice!

The king had to consent to the marriage of his daughter with the young farmer, much to their happiness. Their wedding took place with great splendour, and the king himself enjoyed a lot in the celebrations and merry-making.

PINKIE

## THE PARABLE OF THE PEBBLE

**W**ALKING along a metalled road with his heavy boots, a soldier stepped against a pebble and dislodged it.

The pebble thought: "What a pity, to be thus dislodged! I paved the way for men to walk on. Alas! While my brethren are still serving humanity, I'm put to disuse. Yet, I'm in close proximity to those that serve!"

Sometime later, a boy passed that way, picked up the pebble, and walked on with it.

"A human touch to a stony heart! How bracing!" thought the pebble.

The boy took a few steps, swung his arm round, and flung the pebble up into the air.

The pebble then thought: "Oh! To be flying in the air without wings! How lovely!"

The flying pebble next struck the glasspane of a bungalow window, broke it into fragments, and fell on the soft mattress of the lady of the house.

"How glorious to be thus elevated!" thought the pebble. "From the lowliest to the most exalted, from the hardest to the softest place!"

After a while, the servants of the house noticed the pebble and the glass splinters lying on the mistress's bed. They picked them all up at once and threw them down far below onto the road through the window. The fall of the pebble was sharp and sudden.

Yet the pebble said, "How lucky to be back again to those that serve!"

Take things as they come, isn't it?

G. Neelakantam





**T**HERE once lived in a big farm Bhura the dog, Bil the cat, Moonga the sheep, Dabbu the donkey, Gajju the elephant, Mani the cow, and Mini her calf. They were all friends and lived together peacefully.

Bhura the dog was the most active among all of them and considered himself the most intelligent as well.

Bil the cat was rather fickle

in her ways and went after better adventures and bigger rats outside the farm. Bhura, however, prevented her from going out. He kept a strict eye on Bil and barked her back to the farm. He soon put a stop to her wandering habit.

Moonga the sheep was not too clever. She loved to go after any sheep on the road and many times lost her way. And each time it would be Bhura who would smell her

trail and find her. He often punished Moonga by twisting her small tail in his mouth.

The cow, Mani, was gentle and had a lot of commonsense. She never caused any trouble to anyone. Her calf, Mini, though, was sometimes naughty, but Mani controlled her rather well.

Gajju, the baby elephant, because of his large size, was often ignored by the smaller

animals — much to his disappointment.

Dabbu the donkey was the wisest of all. He was quiet, observant, and extremely hard-working. Except Bhura, all the other animals had great regard for him.

One day, while wandering around, Bil the cat found a red ball in the yard. She picked up the ball and called out, "Bhura, Dabbu, Moonga, Mani and Mini! Come quickly, I've found a ball. Let's have a ball game."

Bhura came bounding when he heard the word 'ball'. Moonga joined them walking slowly. Mini too came jumping. Mani the cow felt lazy and she told Bil, "I would rather watch your game than play," and stood under the shade of a tree.

Gajju, the baby elephant, was excited. As he approached, Bhura said, "Oh, fatso! You're too big to play with us," and barked him away. Gajju felt hurt. Tears rolled down his cheeks. He quietly went away and stood under another tree.

Dabbu was the last to join the group. Seeing Gajju not there, he enquired about him, but no one uttered a word. So, Dabbu looked for the baby elephant and found him standing under a distant tree, down-cast. Dabbu ran to him and asked, "Why are you standing here alone?"

Gajju was too hurt to complain. He just politely refused to join the game.

The ball game was interesting. Bhura always kicked the

ball with his hind leg. Moonga tried her best to get the ball, but she was too slow to do so. Bhura was very fast and there was a good fight between Bhura, Bil, and Mini. Once Bhura so manocuvred the ball that Mini and Bil were left fighting. He picked the ball up quietly and kicked it hard. Dabbu followed the ball, but it went too fast for him and he missed it. Dip.....dip.....dip....., the ball went into a nearby hole.

The game was spoilt. Standing under the tree, Gajju jeered at them. Mani couldn't bear any more. She scolded Bhura. "You think a little too much of yourself. You annoyed Gajju, tried to get the ball every time, and now you've hit it so hard that no one can get it. You selfish dog!"

Bhura was upset and kept quiet. They all walked up to the hole and tried to locate the ball. But no one could ever see it. Bil put her head inside and searched with her eyes and shouted, "There it is, there it is! I can see it, I can see it!" She tried to push her head deeper to pick the ball up, but it was not possible. Then Moonga tried to get the ball, but she too failed. The little calf also had a look at the hole and turned away. Bhura stood apart like a beaten child, helpless and longfaced.

"What shall we do? What can be done?" Bil kept on saying.

Mani walked up to Dabbu. "Can we do something?" she asked.

Dabbu stood thinking for a

while, then his tail wagged and his ears stood straight as though an idea had struck him. "Let me try, I may be able to help."

He straightway walked up to Gajju. The baby elephant received him with a smile. Dabbu bowed his head. "Gajju, I know you're the only one who can help us."

"How can I?" Gajju said with pretence.

"You've a long trunk. We're small and helpless. Don't forget you're our friend," said Dabbu and licked Gajju's big round foot with affection.

Gajju was moved and his voice was choked. "It is only because of you I am coming to help." He then followed Dabbu to the hole. He put his trunk deep inside the hole and picked the ball out in no time.

"The ball's out!" Bil cried with joy.

"How nice it's out!" said Moonga.

"We can play again," said Mini.

Bhura bowed his head and said calmly, "Gajju, I'm very sorry."

"Dabbu is the wisest amongst us. And Gajju helped us," Mani the cow said calmly.

Bhura and Moonga, Bil and Dabbu, Mani and Mini, all thanked Gajju many times. Gajju was happy and he joined them to play the ball game again.

*Manorama Jafa*

# Pride Pulls the Victors Down

**I**N a village near Ahmedabad, there lived ten cloth merchants who were close companions both in their work as well as in their amusement. Once, after a travel to far off places, they were returning through a dense forest when they were robbed by three armed dacoits. The robbers took away everything from their victims, even the costly clothes they were wearing, leaving for them only their loin cloth.

The thought that they had captured ten men and deprived them of all their belongings now went to the heads of the three robbers who were bent upon humiliating the merchants. So, they seated themselves like monarchs on a raised mound and ordered the ten distressed traders to dance before



them, before they could be allowed to return to their homes.

There was among the ten merchants one who was more resourceful than the others. Like an eagle scanning the horizon, he surveyed the three proud men puffed up by their ego. They had carelessly placed their daggers and cudgels on the ground while they seated themselves on the raised mound. In the centre of the clearing, a big bonfire was lit to warm them on a cold evening. The leader of the merchants took the lead in the dance and, as per the usual custom, he started singing a song, to which the rest kept time with hands and feet. The fateful song ran like this:

"We are enty men  
They are crith men;  
If each crith man  
Surround eno men  
Eno man remains  
Ta, Tai, tom, tadingana."

The illiterate robbers thought that the leader was merely singing a funny song as usual. It was so in one sense; for the leader commenced from a distance, and had sung the song over twice before he and his comrades began to approach the robbers closely. The merchants had understood the meaning of the song, because the words used were from their trade language. When merchants discuss the price of any commodity in the presence of a buyer, they always use a riddling sort of language. "What is the price of this cloth?" one trader will ask another. "Enty rupecs," another will reply, meaning 'ten rupees'. Similarly, in the usual trade code language, 'crith' means 'three,' and 'eno' means 'one.'

So, the leader by his song meant to hint to his fellow merchants that they were ten men, while the robbers were only three, that if three pounced upon each of the robbers, nine of them could hold them down, while the remaining one could complete the job by binding the dacoits' hands and feet. And this is what really happened by and by. The robbers were completely unaware of the timing of the song and the tempo and temper of the docile-looking merchants! Soon the three of them rolled on the ground like three bags full of rice!



### THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

SEEN above in reverse is a 1,000-dollar gold 'Horse' proof coin, produced at Britain's Royal Mint for the Hong Kong Government to commemorate the Year of the Horse. According to Chinese astrologers in the Colony, anyone born in the Year of the Horse is self-sufficient, independent, well-liked, and much admired.

The coin is the third in a series of 12, commemorating the years of the Chinese Lunar Calendar and spanning the period 1976 to 1987. Starting with the Dragon in 1976 and the Snake in 1977, it will continue in forthcoming years with the Goat, Monkey, Cockerel, Dog, Pig, Rat, Ox, Tiger, and Rabbit, in that order.

The coins are struck in 22 carat gold, weigh 15.98 grammes, and are 28.4 mm in diameter.

Thus the ten traders recovered all their belongings. Arming themselves with the daggers and cudgels of their enemies, they reached their village safe and happy. They often would amuse their children and friends by relating their adventure and the great lesson it had taught them: "Humility in victory and courage in defeat."

*N.M. Khilnani*

# Grandma's Pickles

Ina and Tina curse the call-bell and the caller, whoever it is. Though it is a Sunday afternoon, the best time for a nap or a mystery novel, the sisters are bent upon completing their homework. However, Grandma's reminders from the next room prompts Tina to go down and find out who their fourth visitor for the afternoon is.

It is only Mrs. Batliwala, to meet Grandma and Grandpa. "Why ME?" protests Grandpa. He thinks of excuses for "being not at home"—literally, too—to avoid "THAT woman!" It transpires that this "great social worker" is organizing a party for cooks! Perhaps the lady wants Grandma to spare some of her pickles, suggests Grandpa. Grandma's pickles are quite famous and the two girls, like their Grandpa, have a craze for them. How, then, can they agree to Grandma parting with her pickles? The arrival of Teddy with a wriggling caterpillar in his mouth does not offer much of a solution to the problem—of pickles. There! Grandma shouts for Grandpa. "Come on, girls, let's face the hurricane together," says Grandpa and follows them to the drawing room.

"OH, hello!" said Mrs. Batliwala, getting up from the sofa. "How naughty of you to keep me waiting all this time!"

Grandpa muttered something inaudible and made for the door. Ina nudged me. I laughed. Poor Grandpa had a mortal terror of gushing females. And Mrs. Batliwala made a beeline for him every time! "Are you going to the garden, Mr. Sen?" she said in a crooning voice. "I was just going to ask you to give me a bunch of your gorgeous dahlias! Just the thing for my Cooks Party!"

"Oh, no!" said Grandpa promptly. "I was not going to the garden now. I was going to...now let me see...ah, yes! the barber!"

"Don't be ridiculous!" said Grandma coming in with the tea. "You had a haircut only yesterday!"

"Ah! So I did!" said Grandpa. "But I have an appointment with the vet. Said he must have a look at old Ted."

There was a rippling laugh from Mrs. Batliwala. "Oh dear, dear," she said.

"Aren't you getting forgetful? The vet never sees a soul on Sundays!"

"No, he doesn't," said poor Grandpa looking absolutely deflated. "How forgetful of me!" Then he brightened up again. "Didn't you want me to get you a Woolfe's Bottle, Ina?" he said pitching upon the first thing that came to his head.

"Yes, Grandpa," we both cried with enthusiasm, though none of us took physics and had only a vague idea about a Woolfe's Bottle!

"But I thought Ina was a student of arts," said Mrs. Batliwala. "Have you changed over to science, dear?"

Before Ina could think of a reply, she added, "The shops are all closed today."

"Ah, yes!" said Grandpa and sat down with the air of a martyr. Grandma had already laid out the tea and she called all of us. Teddy came into the room barking. He, too, was allergic to Mrs. Batliwala for some inexplicable reason.

"Here comes the dog!" cried Mrs. Batliwala eyeing Teddy with a wry face.

"Won't you please take him out, Tina, as his barks give me such a headache!"

Both Ina and I jumped up and ran out of the room with Teddy. Grandpa looked at us with accusing eyes. It was something he'd have loved to do himself!

"Daulat is having a party for cooks," said Grandma sipping her tea.

"I was going to ask you to give them a little talk...you know...a few of your tiger tales. It would be such a novel way of entertaining them!" said Mr. Batliwala.

"Me?" cried Grandpa choking over his tea. "I'm no good at giving talks. It would be much better if Mrs. Sen gave them a talk on making pickles, instead!"

"That reminds me," said Mrs. Batliwala, "I was wondering if you could spare me a jar of your delicious mango pickle for the party."

"Oh!" said Grandma looking blank.

"Oh!" said Ina and I together. That pickle took days to make and we couldn't bear the thought of parting with the whole jar. Normally Grandma, too, would have agreed with us. But right now she felt very annoyed with Grandpa for making such obvious attempts at giving Mrs. Batliwala the slip. She felt that she owed Mrs. Batliwala some amends. "Tina," she said looking at me, "go and fetch the pickle jar from the terrace and give it to Daulat."

"They'll be so pleased!" said Mrs. Batliwala with a broad grin. "Really, your pickles are quite out of this world."

I stood dumb while Grandpa looked tragic.

"Didn't you hear me, Tina?" said Grandma again.

"Yes, Grandma," I said and made for the stairs.

I must say that it was heartbreaking bringing the jar downstairs! The mangoes looked oh! so inviting and luscious, floating in a sea of golden oil, with bits of chillies and ginger clinging to them. The thought of Mrs. Batliwala and her cooks eating them all was utterly unbearable.

"Here she comes," said Mrs. Batliwala

in a voice of supreme satisfaction. "How the cooks will love it!"

"I only hope it is all right," said Grandpa in a dubious voice. "Pickles don't always keep well! I should hate the poor cooks to fall sick!"

Ina stuffed the handkerchief into her mouth and ran out of the room. It was so hilarious watching poor Grandpa's despair. Mrs. Batliwala laughed a ringing laugh. "Aren't you naughty, Mr. Sen? The very idea of pickles going bad!" Then she gave him a sidelong glance and said, "You don't wish me to take it, do you?"

"Oh, no-no-no," cried Grandpa valiantly, confused at being caught. "I was merely concerned about your welfare!"

"I'll take a piece right now and see if it is as wonderful as it looks," said Mrs. Batliwala eyeing the jar longingly. Then she opened the lid and pulled out a piece of mango.

"Funny shape!" said Grandpa looking at the pickle.

"And what's that tail-like bit?" I said in surprise.

"It is a tail!" said Ina.

"Nonsense," cried Grandma from the table. "Mangoes don't have tails. It must be a piece of ginger."

"What is it?" said Mrs. Batliwala holding up the piece. There was a scream. And another! and yet another! and Mrs. Batliwala sank on the sofa covering her face, while the pickle jar crashed on the floor flooding it with its contents.

"Why, it's a mouse! A little one!" cried Ina.

"A mouse!" cried Grandma. "A mouse, did you say? And in my pickle jar?"

"I suppose that is why you were so eager to get rid of it," said Mrs. Batliwala, sitting up, her eyes flashing. "I suppose you felt that my cooks were not human at all. Only Mr. Sen was good enough to warn me that it might not be good! He has a heart and felt for them."

"I...I..." stammered Grandpa, blushing furiously. "I..."

"I shall always remember your honesty with gratitude," said Mrs. Batliwala and swept out of the room majestically. "Goodbye."

"Girls, WHAT does this mean?" cried Grandma. "Oh! I shall never get over

this!"

"Teddy!" said I.

"Teddy!" said Ina.

"Teddy?" asked Grandma amazed. "What has Teddy got to do with it? He doesn't eat pickles!"

"No, but he must have dropped the mouse in the jar," said Ina. "The lid of the pickle jar was open, as it was in the sun."

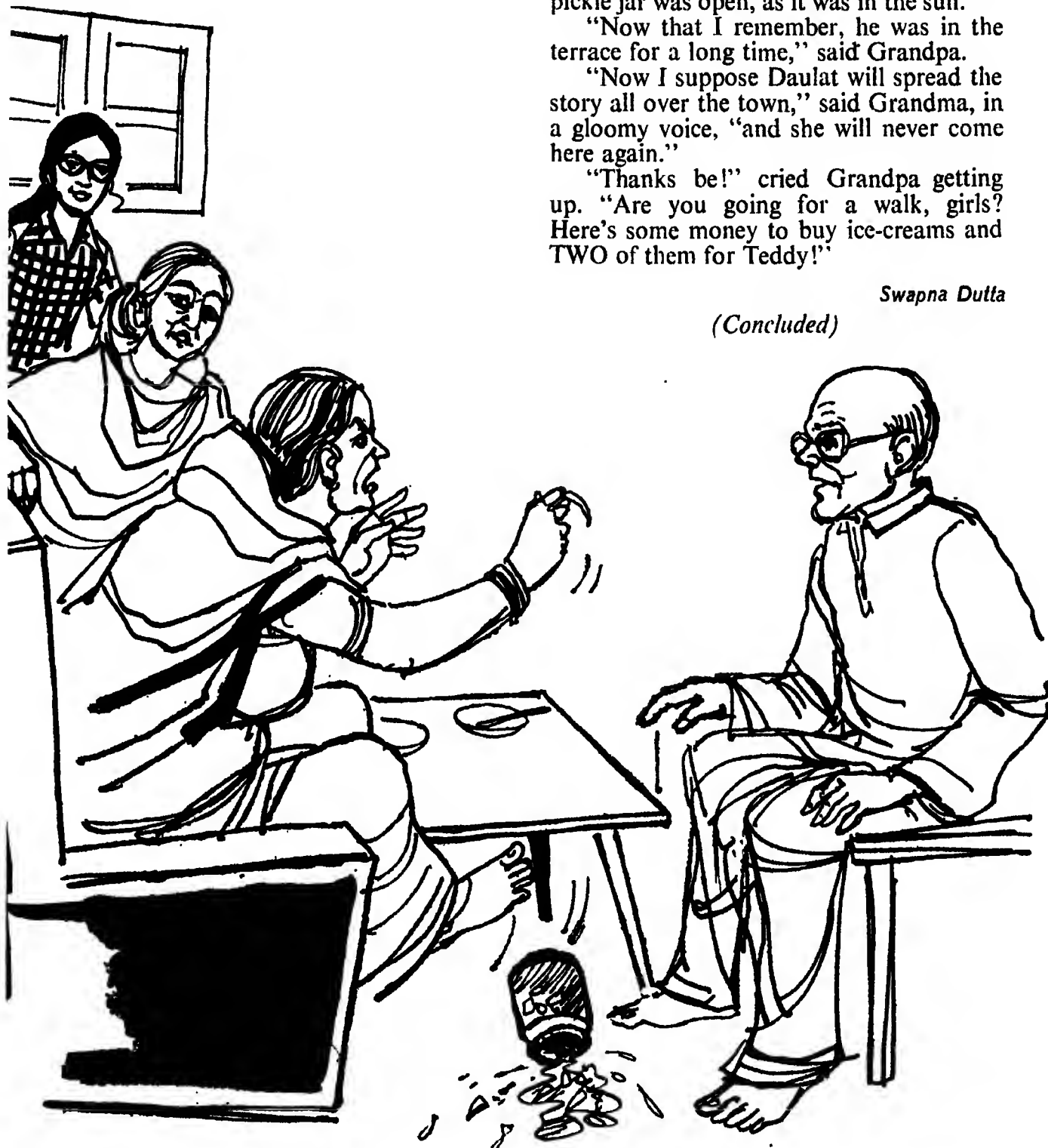
"Now that I remember, he was in the terrace for a long time," said Grandpa.

"Now I suppose Daulat will spread the story all over the town," said Grandma, in a gloomy voice, "and she will never come here again."

"Thanks be!" cried Grandpa getting up. "Are you going for a walk, girls? Here's some money to buy ice-creams and TWO of them for Teddy!"

Swapna Dutta

(Concluded)





# RAMU IN ORBIT

## THE STORY SO FAR

It was the summer of 2077. The sylvan meadows of Ootacamund, in Tamilnadu, suddenly echoed an alarm. "Bleep! Bleep!" The radio telescope there had picked up some strange signals. The control room soon hummed with people. They found the signals unique. Other tracking stations in India and elsewhere were alerted. The giant telescope at Kavalur spotted something strange in the skies. It was seen orbiting Mars. But two days later, it just disappeared! Then, suspense for four long days. Once again, it was Kavalur—spotting a star in broad daylight. Or was it a spaceship?

While scientists agitatedly debated the nature of the satellite, a strange phenomenon was noticed in the Gold Fields of Kolar. The gold deposits there showed some 'signatures', presumably caused by cosmic rays. Adding to the suspense was some intriguing radio noise. Was the alien spacecraft poised for an attack? The conclusion was that the unusual signals meant a message for man, and perhaps the satellite was waiting for an answer. The Indian satellite 'Rohini' flashed a series of messages declaring friendship and offering any help that might be required.

The Rohini Mission Control reported a queer behaviour of the oscillograph. The computer message urged a "meeting" 1,410,000 km away from the earth! An urgent world conference in Sriharikota decided on a rendezvous with the aid of a reusable space shuttle. Preparations were launched for sending a team to meet the alien spacecraft, now named 'Trivikrama'.

The international team of 20 scientists, including four women, on board 'Cauvery' was led by Captain Venkatesh. Cosmonaut Ramu, his wife Anju, also a spacewoman, and navigator Padma made up the other Indian members.

While in 'parking orbit', Cauvery received the message that 'Trivikrama' had moved away without any warning. Was the adventure in space to be called off? wondered scientists on earth. While they debated the pros and cons, on the third day, Cauvery got the warning of a solar flare. The crew and the Mission Control then realized why the alien craft had moved away—to avoid being caught in the solar flare—a clear indication of superior intelligence! The spotting of the retro-fire of Trivikrama brought in some hope of a rendezvous.

On approaching the alien spacecraft, Cauvery noticed what a huge complex it was—resembling a spiral galaxy. However, there was apparently no docking device. Nobody could guess whether

there was any living being inside.

The Mission Control gave the go-ahead for a spacewalk and possible entry into Trivikrama. Cosmonauts Ramu and Anju got ready, and soon the space couple were actually standing on the hull of Trivikrama! They saw an array of sophisticated instrument panels and gauges inside. Though there was no visible response from Trivikrama, Cauvery noticed that whenever there was a change of display or messages, there were synchronous broadcasts from the alien spacecraft. Were the messages being transmitted to another mastercraft?

Venkatesh dramatically switched on the infrared rays on the alien spacecraft. It was as if a million headlamps had been suddenly trained on a dark night. Cauvery, understandably, received a message from Trivikrama. 'They' wanted to know more about the human brain! It became almost certain that the spacecraft was only echoing the orders from elsewhere. In a strange behaviour, Trivikrama ejected what looked like a slab. It stayed in space for some time before it began going down towards the earth, but continued to orbit along with Trivikrama. A flutter was caused by the sudden presence of another intruder in space — this time a second spacecraft from the earth. And it was chasing the slab. It even recovered it from space. Cauvery received orders: "Abandon Mission!" Had the celestial aliens turned their wrath on the earthly 'intruders'?

There was an eerie silence for sometime, which was broken only by a shrill cry from Anju. "Ramu! Ramu!" Cauvery had de-orbited before the cosmonaut could re-enter the spacecraft, and he had been left behind. "Can't he be saved?" Anju asked tearfully. "Yes, there is a chance, but who can predict the rays of Trivikrama?" Venkatesh did not elaborate.

Meanwhile, Ramu was calm. He hid himself against the hull of Trivikrama and soon came upon a switch which opened itself with a spark. Inside the alien world, Ramu felt strangely at home! There were rows and rows of computers, but what absorbed him most was a detailed map etched on a panel. It was the galaxy, Andromeda, nearest to the earth. There were evidences of adaptation from man's knowledge of the solar system. The remarkable identity of data was awe-inspiring.

Now read on...



## 8. SLAB OR COSMONAUT ?

HE proceeded further. No sooner had he entered the inner steps of a huge dome inside than a cocoon of rays surrounded him. He could not even push his hand across, through the cloud of rays. He was trapped. He cursed himself for venturing too far. He thought he had been too ambitious. He should have waited for some time more. He would not have minded his imprisonment, if he had finished his exploration and understood something of the mystery of that extraordinary piece of engineering. As if to make up for the situation, one of the television panels in front of him started showing what looked like the interior. Perhaps that was a remote control spot, where all the activities were monitored.

Ramu soon felt tired and he went to sleep, even while leaning against a computer deck. When he woke up, he saw strange pictures being recorded on the panels. They bore a resemblance to what he used to see in sleep clinics at home. They looked like the electro-encephalograph curves which recorded the electrical activity of the brain during sleep. He wondered why all these were being re-run. Had anybody asked for it? Or was it a routine check?

The TV monitor showing the interior structure of the spacecraft varied with remarkable speed. There were rows and rows of computers. What a dazzling display of miniaturised electronics! Cascades of tapes, like a waterfall, were falling on some substance, which evaporated them instantly. Yet, there was a perpetual supply of tapes. In what looked a busy highway, Ramu could make out rolls of tapes gliding from one computer to another.

Ramu's supply of air and water were limited. He was still in his EVA suit, though he had little hope of floating in free space again. Even if he came out of Trivikrama, he imagined there would be none awaiting him. It looked as if he had spent years in that new world, though only two days had passed, according to his watch.

In the meantime, Capt. Venkatesh was asked to examine the possibility of a rendezvous with the other satellite, with a view to recovering the 'slab'. The Captain of the "other" team announced himself as astronaut Wood, and made a broadcast for the entire solar system. "As the spacecraft Cauvery could not establish anything concrete about the celestial visitor, it was decided by the peoples of the blue planet not to leave such an important occasion to the limited capacity of one craft but to send another, equipped properly to deal with the complexity of the situation.

"We have, however, on our way to the alien craft, reaped a windfall. What appears to be a strange meteorite has been recovered in space and we are going to cut it, if safety conditions permit it. We shall not hesitate to leave the foreign substance in space should anything harmful to man or his atmosphere be found or even suspected."

Venkatesh heard it with rapt attention. He thought he should wait till the other team discovered what was inside the slab. Of course, he was pained to hear aspersions on his mission's capacity.

He decided against attempting a rendezvous with the other craft. He was keen to reserve his fuel for critical manoeuvres later, when possibly he would be asked to attempt a rescue of cosmonaut Ramu. The Captain named the other craft "Garuda", after the bird of great size and power referred to in Indian epics as a means of transport in space.

On board Garuda. Capt. Wood and his two colleagues brooded over their prize acquisition for full two orbits of the earth. They could not make out anything from it. Somehow, the slab was awe inspiring. They could not possibly see any line of opening on it.

During the third orbit, however, one

of the crew took an infra-red lamp near the slab. At once, the lifeless lab revealed a strange arrangement of crystal-like formations. Holding the lamp nearer, they crowded in to find more such formations. At last, there seemed to be something in that slab. Capt. Wood decided to radio the photographs of the slab's new appearance throughout the solar system so that somewhere, someone might read its meaning. The picture of the slab was indeed complicated. Every centimetre was full of dots, which could not be identified readily. However, computers the world over began a massive project to decipher it.

The Canadian Eskimos were the first to come out with an answer when the photographs were shown to them on satellite TV. They were soon followed by some Indian and African tribes. They could not, however, agree on the wordings, but the conclusion was clear and startling. The alien race had offered a formula to double the human life span, as their computers had assessed their present age as too short for any meaningful work!

Back on earth, an urgent international conference was held in the Andamans. Invariably, everyone urged the immediate launching of Operation Rescue, sending messages and even negotiating with the aliens for securing the release of the trapped cosmonaut. "There can be no question of a hostage," thundered the Sri Lanka delegate, pointing out that "a man held captive would reveal how weak we are and open the gates for invasions in the future." He was strongly supported by many other delegates.

However, it was left to the delegate from Nepal to suggest a possible link between the alien demand for biological specimen and the sending of the slab. Perhaps, "they" wanted to trade one for the other! And as the plan had apparently misfired, their "offensive" mode of action had been automatically initiated.

As plans for Operation Rescue were being prepared, a question arose about the slab and its formula. There was no unani-

mity at all: Some wanted it to be adopted straightway, while others warned against a world where the life-span would be doubled. The old would not die and the world would be short of young talents, initiative, and beauty. It was not known whether the doubling of the life-span would result in an active life for those getting the benefit.

A secret ballot was taken and the verdict was in favour of returning the slab and if that was not possible, to leave it in space. But, then a lone voice at the conference asked whether the verdict would be honoured by the other spacecraft which was proudly possessing the slab.

Capt. Wood got the message of the conference relayed by all ground stations. He smiled and firmly declared that he was not going to lose such a historic prize, which comes but once in some millennia to mankind. Who knows, he argued, the new formula, if properly detected and used, would not change the life-styles of people and enable them to live a better life?

But then it was not easy for three persons to disobey the verdict of the entire world! Maybe, if they did not abide by their verdict, they might be denied all landing facilities and guidance. As the crew on Garuda began envisaging the consequences, they felt sleepy. This was unusual, as they had been awake only for two hours that day. In fact, it had been arranged that all three of them would not go to sleep simultaneously. Yet...

Both Captain Venkatesh and Mission Control could not get any response from Garuda, despite repeated calls. They thought the spacecraft was maintaining a deliberate silence. However, it soon became clear that the crew could not answer, as they were all sleeping. Experts on earth were unable to agree on the cause for such a strange interlude.

*Mohan Sundara Rajan*

*(To be concluded)*

# Boy Edison's Experiments



**W**HO has not heard of Thomas Alva Edison, one of the chief benefactors of humanity because of his many great inventions? He is without question the most famous of all American inventors. The whole world stands in his debt for his three most important achievements—the electric light, the motion picture, and the phonograph.

But many may not know the whole story of Edison's life, from the day of his humble birth in 1847 to his death in 1931. Let me tell you here, of his boyhood thirst for scientific knowledge, his conscientious self-education, his early struggle for achievement, and his honour-filled later years in his New Jersey laboratory.

Alva Edison was born at Milan, a small town on the banks of the Huron River in the State of Ohio, U.S.A. "What shall we name him?" asked Nancy Edison, the newborn's mother, as her husband, Samuel Edison, entered the first-floor bedroom to see his son and Nancy threw back the edge of the blanket and revealed a tiny red-faced baby.

"That nose tells the world he is an Edison," said Sam.

"Yes," agreed his wife. "So does those grey-blue eyes. But he does have my brown hair. What shall we name him?"

"The boy will need two names. You pick out one and I'll select the other," said Sam.

"I want to name our son Alva, after our best friend Captain Alva Bradley," said Nancy after a little thought.

"I'll pick Thomas for the other name, because I'm tired of all the Johns and Samuels in my family," said Sam.

"Alva Thomas Edison," repeated Nancy softly. "Oh, Sam, these initials spell A-T-E. That combination just won't do at all."

"All right, just turn them about. We'll name our son Thomas Alva Edison," said Sam laughing.

"That's better," agreed the mother. "We'll call him Alva. Get the family Bible, and write in the date and name of our son."

Sam got the Bible from the living room and, sitting beside his wife, turned to the blank pages at the end of the book. In a firm

hand, he wrote: "Thomas Alva Edison, born February 11, 1847."

The early Edisons had come to America from Holland in 1730. The first American Edison settled along the Passaic River amid the Orange Mountains in New Jersey. After many turns of fate, Samuel Edison came to live in Milan, in 1839, where he owned a sawmill and manufactured wooden shingles. He ran a prosperous business.

Young Alva, or Al, as he was soon called by everyone, grew rapidly. From the first, he was an inquisitive child. As soon as he could walk, he began to explore the world about him. When he learned to put words together into sentences, every other sentence began with a "Why" or "What".

Al had an elder sister, Tannic, but she could not spare much time for her younger brother. Mrs. Edison had her hands full running the house. Luckily in Milan, Nancy Edison had a 13-year-old niece, named Nancy after her aunt. To young Nan fell much of the burden of caring for her active cousin, Al. She had to answer his never-ending questions. She had to rescue him from angry chickens that pecked him in protest when he pulled out their feathers to see what kept them in place! She had to free terrified ducks that Al caught to study their strange-looking webbed feet. And Al was then only three years old.

Dad, at Al's request, would bring home great armfuls of shavings, spoiled shingles, and blocks of wood from his sawmill. With these, Al spent happy hours building roads and bridges, canal boats, and houses.

A canal joined Milan to the navigable portion of the Huron River. Down this canal from Milan moved large loads of wheat, vegetables, timber, and other products. Al loved to stand and look at the canal boats moving slowly down the river behind the mules that plodded along the lowpath. The boatmen sang cheerily as they drifted by and Al learned their songs. At their work, the sawmill workers sang old folk tunes. Al stored his memory with all these tunes and laid the foundation for his lifelong love for rollicking songs and jolly tunes.

As Al grew older, his curiosity grew even faster than his body shot upward. He would not always accept the explanations grown-

ups gave in answer to his questions. He often tried to prove things for himself!

One day, a brood of fluffy young chickens engaged his attention. He wanted to know where baby chicks came from. Patient Nan, his nurse, explained that hens laid eggs and then sat upon them until baby chicks came out of the white shells.

Some minutes later, Al found an opportunity to slip unnoticed from the house. He went straight to the chicken house and gathered eggs until his hands and pockets could hold no more. He crept into the barn, and made a nest of fresh fragrant hay, and arranged the eggs in a circle. Then he carefully sat down on them. He would prove to himself whether baby chicks really did come from sitting on eggs.

Nan missed her six-year-old charge about an hour later. She called and called. Finally, she began a search of the yard and its buildings. In the barn, she found Al sitting motionless in the hay.

"Why didn't you answer me?" she demanded. "What on earth are you doing in here?"

"I'm making eggs into baby chicks," Al announced proudly.

Nan gave a little shriek. "People don't hatch eggs. You have done nothing but ruin your clothes," she scolded.

She snatched his hand and pulled him from the nest. On the hay rested a shapeless, sticky mess of crushed eggs. Al began to cry. "I'm going to take you to your mother," she declared.

Al was not crying because he had spoiled his pants. He cried because his experiment turned out badly!

When his mother understood why Al sat upon the eggs, she explained that it took three weeks to change eggs into baby chicks and that only a mother hen could sit upon the delicate eggs without breaking them.

A few days later, the mother took the small boy to the chicken house. She lifted a hen from a nest and showed Al some eggs just hatching. With his own eyes, Al saw a baby chick soft and yellow wiggle out of the shell. Chickens did come from eggs. Experiments could prove things, but only if they were performed correctly.

A. P. Som

# The Up-and-Down Twins of Science

**D**EPENDING upon the one you are talking about, scientists would find a Piccard either up or down! They could not be kept on the earth for long.

Yes, I am referring to Jean Piccard and Auguste Piccard, the fabulous Swiss twins, who have more than once made front page news and amazed the world with their explorations. As explorers of the unknown, these brothers had few equals among modern scientists. Some people smilingly referred to them as 'those crazy Piccards'.

A look at them and you will immediately guess that they are scientists—and twins. Auguste is a tall (1.9 m), angular man with a fringe of long hair and a far away look in his eyes. Jean is also a tall (1.88m), angular man with a fringe of long hair, and a far away look in his eyes!

Perhaps it was a good thing that Jean lived in Minnesota, U.S.A., and Auguste in Belgium, as nobody would have told them apart if they had lived in the same place!

When they were young, they decided to play a trick on their barber. As the story goes, Jean went in and asked for a quick and clean shave. Then, in light humour, he complained to the barber that his beard grew so thick that he had had to have a shave at least twice a day, if not more. The barber assured him that his shave was so close that Jean would have no trouble for the next 24 hours.

In fact, he even offered the scientist a free shave if he needed one in less than 24 hours. Then he proceeded to scrape the beard off Jean's face with the most sharp-edged razor he had. A few hours later, Auguste, his face covered with a stubble, appeared in the saloon. He got a free shave from the most amazed barber in Switzerland! The barber had never seen such a fast and thick growth before. The mystery was, of course, solved when the barber saw both of them walking in step in the evening.

He was, however, not sure which of the Piccards had come to him first and played the trick on him.

Even though they lived thousands of miles apart, they often got the same brain-wave at the same time, as their letters later revealed. And these brainwaves can recall the fantastic adventures that delighted the imagination of Jules Verne. Certainly the most inventive writer could not have dreamed up anything better than Auguste Piccard's first great ascent into the blue-black heights of sky, where man had never ventured before.

It began in the late 20s when Auguste got to thinking about cosmic rays. Entering into our atmosphere from remote space are strange radiations that once baffled science. Not many of these rays penetrate the earth's atmosphere. Why not, thought Auguste Piccard, go up—way up—where there is virtually no atmosphere? With the aid of proper instruments, he should be able to measure cosmic rays as they could never be measured on the ground.

Other scientists thought this incredulous: this idea of going so high in a balloon seemed fantastic. How would he keep alive in thin atmosphere? How would he control a balloon which could not be steered?

But Piccard had all the answers ready on his finger tips. As for control, he would take his chances. The Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research provided enough money to build the curious craft.

The public laughed as preparations for the ascent went forward. In September 1930, all seemed ready. Piccard was about to take off. Then the barometer dropped, and Auguste had to wait. Weeks went by, then months. The weather was never just right. Finally, on May 27, 1931, Auguste felt that the moment had arrived. As the great balloon swelled again, a wind sprang up, jerking the gondola from its platform.

Possibly it was damaged, but Piccard's mind was made up. The ascent could not be put off any longer.

Piccard and his friend Paul Kipfer climbed into the tiny cabin. Workmen closed the manholes and the two scientists checked their instruments. Piccard called, "Let go everything!" and waited for a signal from the men below that they were releasing the balloon. But no signal came. Then Piccard looked out of the window and, to his surprise, saw a chimney disappearing below. The men on the ground had forgotten to signal and the men inside the cabin had not heard the shouts of the crowd as the ropes were cast loose.

As they rose higher and higher, a number of difficulties appeared, but they were solved on the spot. Piccard and his friend reached an altitude of 16 km above the earth. As night approached, the balloon was on its way down. They had a worry about the landing. Below them were yawning Alpine crevasses and peaks. As if guided by an unseen hand, the balloon settled down in the safest of all possible spots, on a broad glacier. Gratefully, the two adventurers made camp. Next morning, they made their way to a village and the great news was soon flashed to the world.

For Auguste this was just a start. He made a second ascent to a height of more than 16 km to break his own record. Meanwhile, in America, his brother Jean was watching events abroad with impatience. With Auguste's advice, Jean and his wife Jeannette designed a craft something like the first balloon. There was not much money available: the \$5,000 that they finally scraped together came mostly from friends, including motor car manufacturer Henry Ford. Ford came to the take-off spot personally. The take-off itself, however, was uneventful. The big balloon soared swiftly, while 45,000 people cheered. The long climb ended at 17.54 km. Jean had broken brother Auguste's record. His wife Jeannette holds the women's balloon record of 16.76 km.

After establishing an altitude record,

Auguste turned his attention towards the depths of ocean. He fabricated a fantastic equipment for a daring venture in the crushing depths of the sea. On the ocean floor lurks a menace far more ghastly than the hideous sea monsters of the imagination. That menace is the pressure exerted by water. Five kilometres below the surface it reaches 500 kgs sq cm. Piccard came up with something startling—a "free balloon" that would travel under water much as his balloons had soared in the atmosphere. Fantastic as the device may sound, it made sense to the directors of the Belgian National Fund. They put up the money once again for Piccard, and he immediately began constructing his fabulous 'Bathyscaph'. When it was finished, it looked like a steel ball attached to a big tank, but actually it was a highly complicated mechanism.

"What did you hope to find beneath the surface of the sea?" someone asked Auguste.

"It is about time we started exploring down there," he declared. "The oceans will be mankind's treasure trove of the future." His words have come true. Eighty per cent of our natural resources—minerals and oil—are being found at the bottom of the oceans today.

Auguste Piccard knew that even though the bathyscaph was a mechanical marvel, things could go wrong. The first bathyscaph was given to the French Science Foundation in 1952. In 1953 he and his equally famous son, Jacques, built up another bathyscaph named 'Trieste' with the help of money from an Italian company. It was in 'Trieste' that the record-breaking drive (10,912 m) to what is considered the deepest spot in the ocean was made on January 23, 1960.

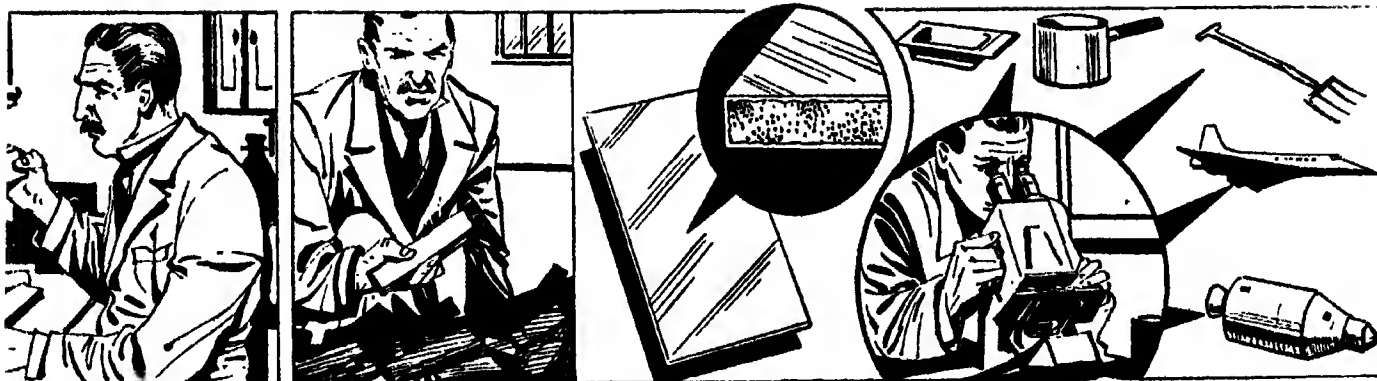
Jean Piccard's son, Donald, is engaged in hot air balloon studies. He holds a record for free flight balloon.

Auguste and Jean were confident that you just cannot hold a Piccard on earth for long. They must either go down or go up!

G.V. Joshi



# HOW IT'S MADE



**S**TEEL is the backbone of the modern world and stainless steel is one of its most versatile forms – yet its discovery was accidental. In 1913, a research worker, Harry Brearley, was seeking a better steel for gun barrels at the Brown-Firth works in Sheffield, England. He added carbon and chromium to iron, but the alloy did not prove suitable.

His samples went to the scrap heap in the laboratory yard. Weeks later, Brearley was surprised to find them remaining bright while other scrap had rusted. He had made one form of stainless steel. This led to a range of rust-resistant alloys which all contain some chromium.

Their freedom from rusting and chemical attack is given by a naturally occurring chromium-rich oxide film which sticks tightly on the surface. This is invisible and, unlike applied coatings, forms again if damaged in working the steel or if the finished product is scratched.

These steels, however, vary in composition. Nickel, molybdenum, titanium, niobium, and other elements may also be added giving various strengths and working properties. Painstaking research establishes the best alloy for the job, whether for making saucepans and garden tools or building nuclear reactors or spacecraft.



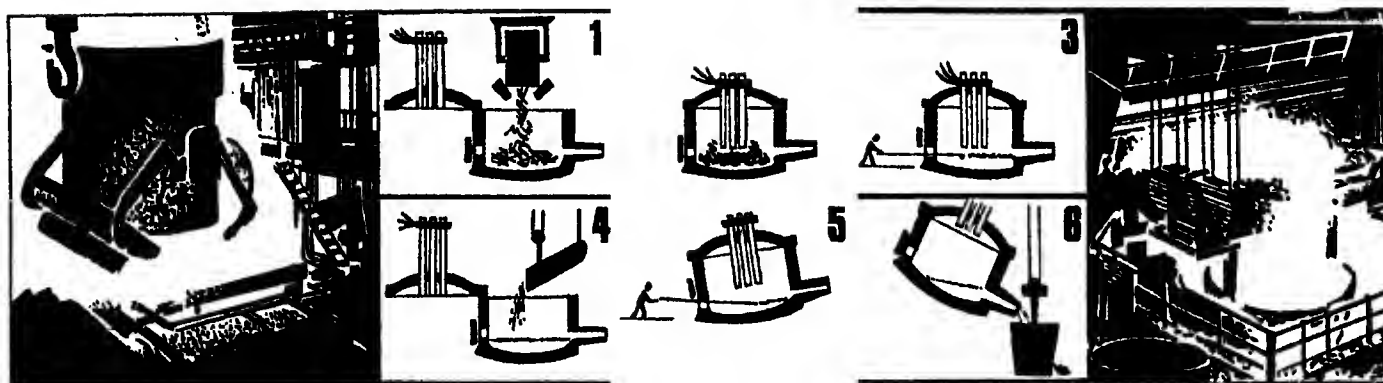
**T**HERE are three main groups: martensitic, ferritic, and austenitic. What Brearley discovered was martensitic. Like this, ferritic is a low-carbon chromium-steel. Austenitic – the most widely used – includes nickel.

Martensitic types can be strengthened and hardened by quenching and tempering like ordinary steels(1). Ferritics do not respond in this way. They are magnetic(2). Austenitic steels are non-magnetic. They cannot be hardened by heat treatment but lend themselves readily to “forming” without breaking; an advantage in mass processing methods(3).

Steelmaking starts with the conversion of iron from its carbon compound form. High temperature reactions in the steel-making furnace burn off unwanted impurities such as silicon, manganese, and carbon. Other metallic elements are added to the molten metal to yield the type of steel required.

Most modern stainless steel of the austenitic type is made in electric melting furnaces. The raw materials are carbon or low-alloy steel scrap(A), stainless steel scrap(B), nickel (C), ferro-chromium and other ferro alloys(D). To these are added suitable slag materials to take up the impurities.

# STAINLESS STEEL

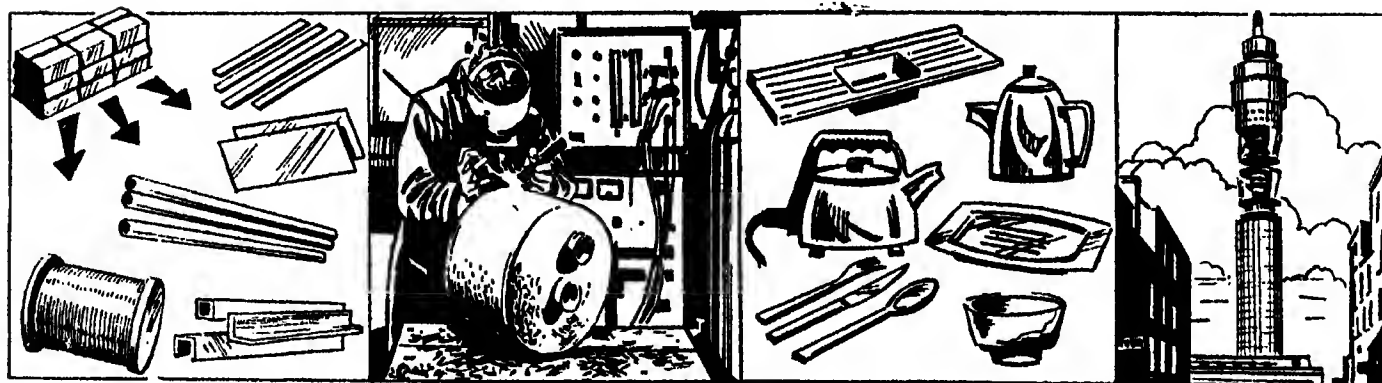


**T**HE furnace is a circular shallow bath holding from 15 to 150 tonnes of steel. It has a moveable roof through which three carbon electrodes are raised or lowered. At the start of the process, the electrodes are withdrawn and the roof swung clear to allow an overhead crane to charge the bath with scrap (1).

Then the roof is swung back into position and the electrodes lowered into the furnace (2). A powerful electric current is passed through the metal via the electrodes and the heat generated when an arc is struck melts the scrap (3). Lime, fluorspar and iron oxide then added combine with impurities in the metal to form liquid slag (4).

At this stage unwanted silicon, manganese and phosphorous have gone into the slag which can be raked off through a side door in the furnace (5). Carbon is reduced by passing oxygen through. Since the chromium will then become oxidised, it is restored to the metal melt by adding de-oxidant compounds.

Throughout the process, samples of the steel are taken to check it is of the right mixture. The check after slag removal is an important one since final alloy adjustments can then be made. After these, the molten stainless steel is brought again to the right temperature, tapped into a ladle, and cast into ingot moulds to solidify (6).



**T**HESE ingots are in turn the raw material for manufacture, directly or through intermediate stages, of stainless steel strip, forgings, bars, rods, sections, tube and wire.

Austenitic stainless steels can be joined by all the usual processes — screwing, bolting, and riveting; and adhesive joints are readily made by soldering, spot or seam welding.

The fact that the finished metal product needs no further treatment except minor surface cleaning from time to time is one of the major advantages of stainless steel. This makes it invaluable

in the home. Kitchen sinks, teapots, electric kettles, and cutlery make use of its qualities. Washing machines, cookers, irons, dishwashers and food mixers have stainless steel parts.

Industry in general has long been based on steel-making skills and the range of its stainless products is wide. Food industries, medicine, chemical production, the car, aerospace and nuclear industries all need stainless steel. Even the building industry applies it, as in buildings like the celebrated Post Office Tower in London.

*(Courtesy: BIS)*

*(Next month: Nylon Fibres)*



# HOW and WHY

*Srujan Prakash Das (14), Bhadrak, Orissa, wants to know: Why does a dog go round and round before it lies down?*

Do all dogs go round and round before sitting down or lying down? My own impression is that only some dogs do and that, too, not always. In any case, all dogs do seem at least to trace a curve with their bodies (thereby giving the impression of going round) before they fall into a sitting or lying position.

One possible explanation to this behaviour could be that dogs were once upon a time conditioned into performing this action when their natural habitat was the jungle wilderness (consisting of tall grass and bushes). Some of their still wild relatives are known to do this in order to flatten out the long grass and make a smooth, comfortable place for lying down. This action has become redundant in the domesticated species, and it is possible that under some conditions (either physiologically or environmentally induced), an animal's occasional need to perform this action becomes very sharp, making him go through this apparently meaningless ritual with great concentration. This, then, becomes an instinctive behaviour of the dog.

Now, a word about instinct, since this is a word much in use but rarely done so with understanding. Instinct refers to a compelling need of the organism to behave in a certain way, and what exactly motivates him to behave in this way is often not easy to understand. But the behaviour patterns are handed down from generation to generation, and when the animal is born, he already has this information stored

somewhere in his brain. Animals, however, are not exclusively governed by one drive at a time. There is (to use an expression coined by Dr. Conrad Lorentz) a 'whole parliament of instincts fighting for expression at the same time.' Sometimes, a wise compromise is reached enabling him to tackle the problem at hand much better. Actions from instincts in animals lower down in the evolutionary ladder are simply and easily performed, but going further up (as the brain becomes bigger and more complex), learning and adaptation also begin to play a part in behaviour. Fixed behaviour patterns tend to get either obscured or modified because of other learnt patterns. In our case (of the dog going round and round), the dog's behaviour springs from a simple instinct\* (which is a kind of reflex action). Having left his wild habitat, the dog should have abandoned this behaviour pattern, but since it became an instinct through generations of conditioning and learning, it struggles to surface now and then. It is difficult to pump out exactly the cause that makes him behave this way. Often, the motivation is from within (i.e., his own physiology). Sometimes, it could be something in the environment that motivates him. So, if you place a dog in tall grass and expect it to start going round and round immediately, you will be disappointed. And yet, the dog may surprise you! That's instinct for you.

*Meera Ramakrishnan*

*\* Simple instincts are not one of the four powerful drives of fright, hunger, aggression, and sex. They are a variety of reflex activity, something learnt through conditioning, either for survival or for a simple adaptation to the environment.*



# CHILDREN AND CHESS

**M**AYA CHIBURDANIDZE, a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Tbilisi (capital of Soviet Georgia), is the 1977 USSR women's chess champion. She has been awarded the title of Grandmaster by the International Chess Federation.

The history of chess champions does not know such a young champion, though the number of young girls participating in women's chess tournaments is constantly increasing.

But Maya's victory itself was a logical continuation of her previous successes. Chess fans may still remember the "hot" days of the World chess semi-final championship, in which Chiburdanidze gained victory over her experienced competitor, Elena Akhmalovskaya, and after that joined the three world's best women chess players.

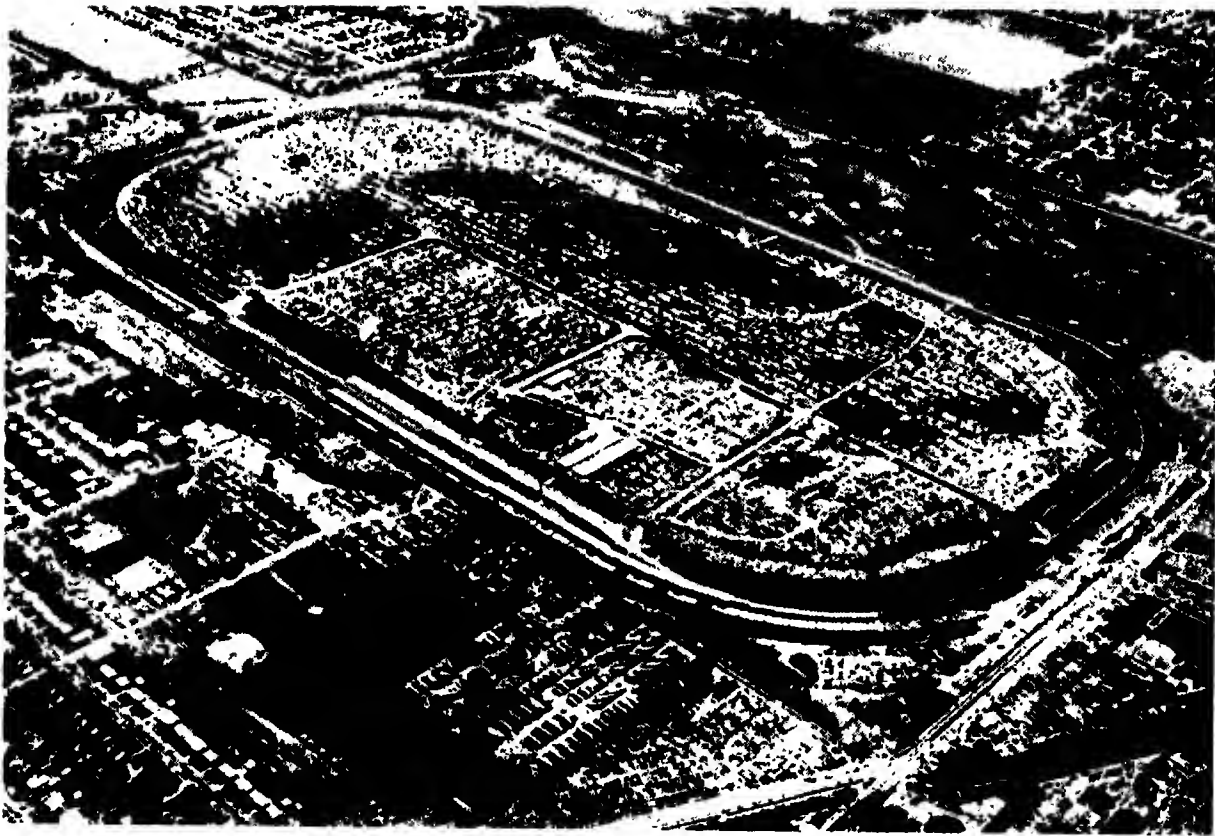
The year 1977 was very fruitful, strenuous, but happy for Maya. Her coach, Grandmaster Eduard Gufeld, and Maya herself feel that all the previous tournaments in which she participated were just try-outs before the main "exam"—the World final chess championship.

Maya is a pupil of tenth grade. Chess is not her only passion; she learns the old Georgian language and, after finishing school, intends to enter the philological faculty.

Britain's leading young chess player, 12-year-old Nigel Short, (see photo at right) takes on the massed "opposition" of 23 play-

ers in a challenge match. The match took place recently at Salter's Hall, in London. His opponents included a number of top executives from the City. After playing for 4 hours 20 minutes Nigel, who comes from Manchester in northwest England, had lost only one game. His only complaint was that his feet ached!





# THE STORY OF AUTO-RACING

THE motor car that was to provide mobility to millions in the 20th century had a far more humble beginning. It began its career in the 19th century as a plaything of the wealthy. Rich enthusiasts raced the flimsy contraption throughout France (which had the best roads), up and down the Alpine hills, and sometimes spent half their time patching Dunlop's new pneumatic tyres. For ladies who dared the dusty roads, Paris courtiers advertised the latest in goggles and windproof ankle-length coats. In England, the Red Flag, inspired by stage coach lines, temporarily held back motor cars by requiring a man to walk ahead of them to warn people with his flag. But wisely,

in 1896 the Act was repealed and England's gentle-folk took to the roads. Magazines, like the Automotor and the Horseless Vehicle Journal, initiated them into the mysteries of shifting gears and filling petrol tanks. The age of the Motor car had begun.

In 1894, a motor car enthusiast, Monsieur Gifford of Paris, thought of an organized motor car race; and through the magazine, Le Petit Journal, he advertised his idea. The public response was overwhelming. On a cool morning, the first ever motor car race got under way. The route was from Paris to Rouen, some 80 miles (128 km) away. A de Dion Bonton steam tractor reached Rouen first. Naturally,

the next race the following year was more ambitious. The distance to be covered was from Paris to Bordeaux and back to Paris—a total of 735 miles. Like the previous time, the race was covered with tremendous eagerness by spectators, participants, and the Press. Emile Levassor, driving a French Panhard, won the race driving at an average speed of 15 miles an hour.

The enthusiasm for motor car racing was infectious. It soon spread from France to other European countries. The Automobile Club of France was formed by the Comte de Dion. This was followed by the founding of many similar clubs in neighbouring countries. Onward from this, regu-

lar races were arranged and a definite system of trials started. By the turn of the century, participation in these races was overwhelming, though there was a deplorable lack of proper organisation. During the 1903 Paris-Madrid race, when cars were capable of reaching a maximum speed of 60 mph, no precautions were taken along the route. As a consequence, many curious on-lookers, both people and cattle, drifted on to the road to have a better view of the racing machines and ended up in accidents. Alarmed at the accelerating accident-rate during

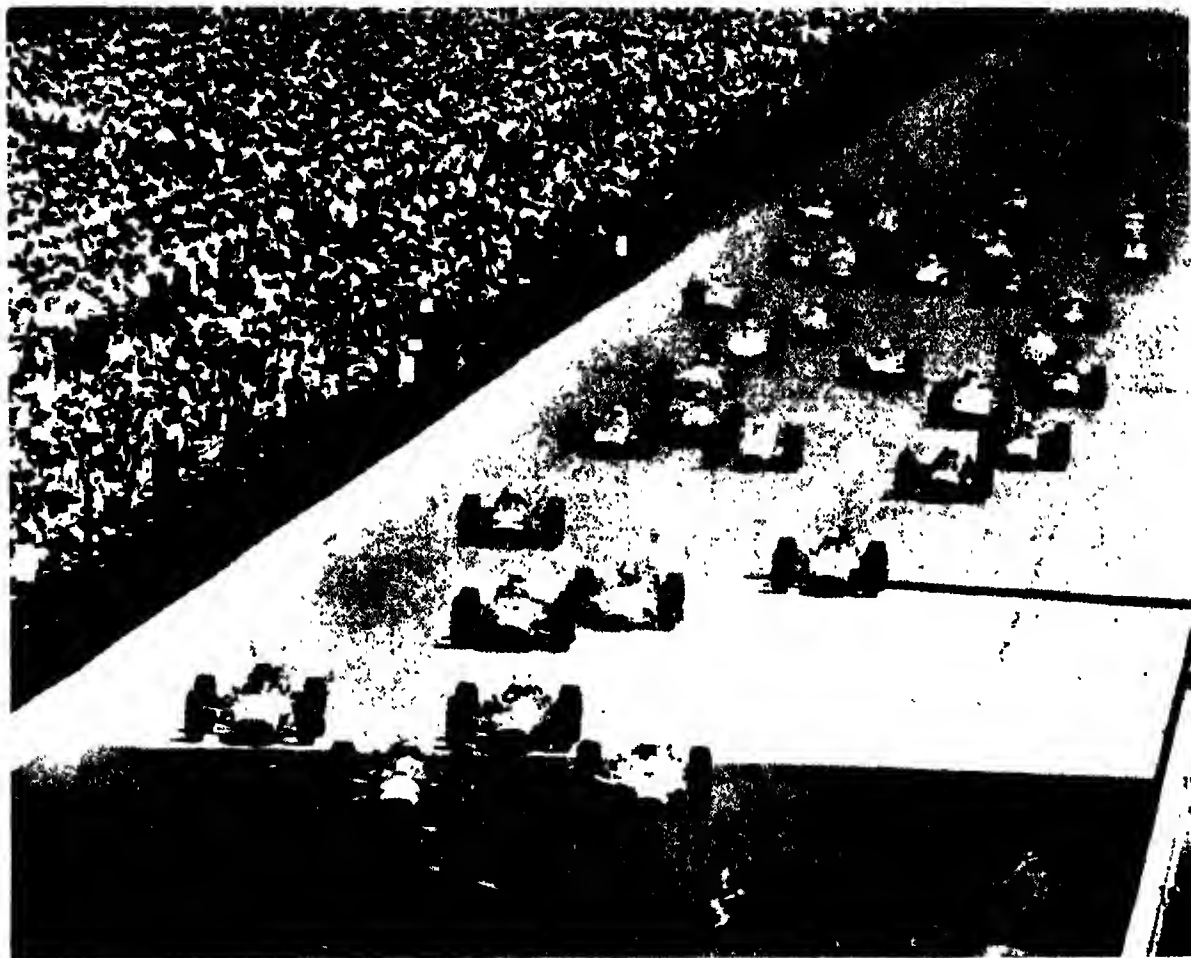
the event the French and Spanish authorities cancelled the race. All cars that had reached Bordeaux were forced back home to Paris on a train!

By a curious coincidence, two pioneers of motor car racing have been journalists. One was Gifford and the other, James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald. Bennett announced a trophy for a series of races, including one to be run on a triangular circuit of closed roads in Ireland. The only stipulation was that a competing car had to be wholly manufactured in one country. With this start, the con-

test for international motor supremacy began.

The Gordon Bennett races were run successfully for a few years till 1906, when a quarrel among the organizers led to boycott. As a substitute, the French organized the first Grand Prix race near Le Mans. A triangular circuit was selected and rules drawn out. It was decided that a competitor would have to do 12 laps of the course—totalling almost 70 miles. The rough roads were taxing on a driver, and for most part of two whole days drivers spent their energy negotiating them properly. The

A race in progress at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, USA. An aerial view of the Speedway can be seen on the facing page.



gruelling race had its casualties. One driver came off the course in sheer exhaustion. Another nearly went blind. But a sturdy Hungarian, Ferenc Szisz, withstood the rigours of the race remarkably well and won the contest in a Renault, having driven the car at an average speed of 63 mph.

International motor racing grew rapidly in scope and popularity till the First World War. Drivers like Rudolf Caracciola, Hermann Lang, Berndt Rosemeyer, Louis Chiron, and Achille Marzi became national heroes—all because of their brilliance in controlling the wheels of a fast vehicle. But the crown of 'the greatest of the era' sat firmly on the head of Tazio Giorgio Nuvolari, who won 64 major events in a 29-year racing career.

After a brief interval due to the First World War, racing was resumed in Europe with new fervour. The first closed circuit for Grand Prix racing was built at Mussolini's instigation at Monza in Italy. Mussolini was addicted to fast cars and racing. At one time, both his son and his chauffeur were upholding his country's honour in the sport—an honour he took very seriously. Konrad Adenauer was responsible for the conception of Germany's first closed racing circuit. It started as a scheme for decreasing unemployment. Adenauer, who was then Mayor of Cologne, thought that the construction of a closed racing circuit in Nurburgring would give a boost to tourist trade.

All through the next two decades, till the outbreak of World War II, the Germans and the Italians were the sole manufacturers of racing cars.

The Alfa Romeos of Milan were almost invincible for a good part of the thirties, but they were slowly overtaken by the German Mercedes-Benz and the Italian Maseratis. The Auto-Union designed by Dr. Ferdinand Porsche (who later masterminded the Volkswagen prototype), too, became a force to reckon with. This was the first racing machine to have the engine in the rear.

The Second World War naturally brought an end to most sport activities in Europe. But the 1950s saw a new trend in international racing. The chief credit for this goes to an Italian, Count Antonio Brevio. Brevio conceived the idea of organizing a World Drivers' Championship. The winner of the championship would be that driver of a Formula I car who had collected the most points on a selected circuit. The Grand Prix circuit included about 13 races all over the world. In the inaugural year, 1950, the races for the World Championship calendar were the Grand Prix of Europe at Silverstone, the Grand Prix of Monaco, the Grand Prix of Germany in Nurburgring, and the Grand Prix of Italy in Monza, though the races to be considered changed from year to year. In recent years, the Grand Prix of Holland, South Africa, Argentina, and the U.S.A. have been included. The idea excited the imagination of racing fans and the event has remained till today as captivating as in the year of its birth.

The first World Champion, Giuseppe 'Nino' Farina, a political economist by profession, was a relentless racing driver by inclination. He drove his

machine with a killer instinct that made his Alfa Romeo team almost unconquerable in the early fifties. In those days, the Alfas were driven by Nino Farina, Luigi Fagioli, and Juan Fangio—one of the best teams ever. Through the next ten years, their main rivals was the Ferrari team of Alberto Ascari, Gigi Villorisi, and Gonzalez.

In retrospect, one can clearly see that the racing stage of the fifties was dominated by two men—Juan Fangio of Argentina and Alberto Ascari of Italy. By 1955, each had won two World Championships apiece. The world waited breathlessly for the start of the next racing. Though contenders for the same title, Fangio and Ascari came from vastly differing backgrounds. Alberto was the son of the famous racing driver, Antonio Ascari. The racing blood in the family first led Ascari junior to success on motor cycles. In 1940, he suddenly leapt from the pillion to the driver's seat in Formula I cars and rapidly became recognized as one of the foremost drivers in the international arena.

The son of a house-painter, Juan Fangio's rise to fame was far more arduous. Though always successful in his own country, the Argentinian in his initial racing days failed to impress on the European circuit. He won his first World Championship in 1952, at a relatively advanced age of 40. Ascari beat him the next year by winning six Grand Prix races. 1954, too, was a golden year for 'Midas' Ascari, for on his Ferrari, he rode to victory in almost every race he entered. Juan Fangio, in the meanwhile, had switched from Alfa Ro-

meo to Maserati, and he won the crown in 1954.

Early in 1955, Alberto was testing a new Ferrari sports car on the track at Monza, when the car unaccountably crashed, killing its famous driver instantaneously. With Ascari gone, no one on the cir-

cuit could prevent Juan Fangio from pocketing the World Drivers' Championship that year and every year thereafter till 1958. Whether he drove a Mercedes-Benz, a Ferrari, or a Maserati, Juan was the 'king'. A powerful man with a computer-like mind, Fangio retir-

ed in 1959, at the age of 48, bringing to an end a brilliant, successful career.

By now, a Grand Prix race had become a professionally efficient event.

*Rukmini Mukherjee*

*(To be continued)*

## SWIM CHAMPION



## LOVES TO PICK BERRIES!

**A**MONG the 10 best Soviet sportsmen of 1977, there is a 13-year-old Leningrad schoolgirl—Julia Bogdanova. She wound up a fine season, with victories in the 100m and 200m breaststroke events of the European Championship.

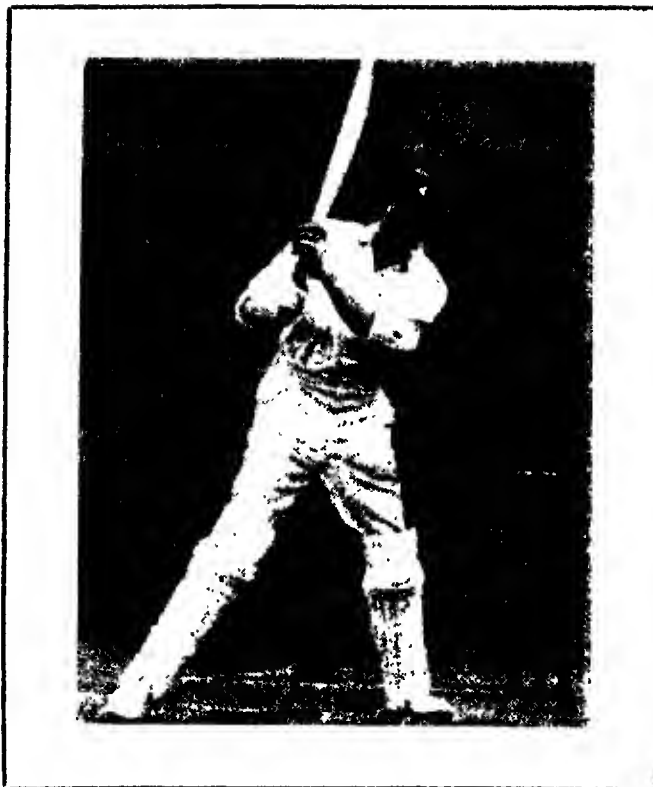
Possibly, it is Julia's keen perception of harmony of movement, combined with her natural-born plasticity and flexibility, that has helped her master all the elements of the breaststroke, a style calling for strict symmetric and synchronous strokes.

According to Boris Zenov, the Soviet expert in the breaststroke, Bogdanova's style is unique. Julia's trainer, Marina Amirova, says that she noted three distinctive features in her charge: her modesty verging at times on shyness, punctuality in carrying out practice assignments, and the constant desire to be first in competition. It is not only in the breaststroke—Bogdanova frequently wins in free-style and other events, as well.

It was the high standards of training at the Leningrad swimming centre plus keen rivalry put up by Elvira Vasilkova, Svetlana Varganova, and Irina Goidova that took Julia to the top of the world breaststroke classification table in just two years. She now heads the table in the 100m and 200m distances.

When she is not in the pool, Julia likes to go out to the woods to pick berries and mushrooms, and to play with the family pet, Pushok, a tabby. She also enjoys adventure films. Her favourite subject at school is algebra.





## CRICKET'S LEFT-HANDED ARTIST

**B** RADMAN and Hammond were more prolific, Jessop and Macartney were harder hitters, Woodfull and Ponsford were more difficult to dislodge, but none in the entire history of cricket could be found to rival Frank Edward Woolley in the flowing grace and effortless ease of his batsmanship.

Frank Woolley was capable of transforming the dulllest day into a day of sunshine; he could raise a game from a mere war of attrition to dazzling heights with his felicitous batting. Even with the passing years, his fame has not passed into oblivion, for Woolley was one of the truly great cricket artists whose contribution to cricket's history and culture has remained, in many ways, still unsurpassed.

Born at Tonbridge, Kent, on May 27, 1887, Woolley made his first-class debut for the County in 1906 at the age of 19. The game was against Lancashire and he was dismissed for a duck; in the second innings he gave a hint of future glory with a hard-hitting quicksilver 64.

Woolley's first Test appearance came in 1909 against Australia, and though he did nothing spectacular, he was selected to tour South Africa where, against a strong spin

and googly attack, he made 256 runs at 32.00, top-scoring in both innings of the Capetown Test with 69 and 64.

Woolley made the first of his three tours to Australia in 1911-12, and it was on that tour that he made his first Test century, "a honey-sweet confection of grace and latent power," his dazzling 133 not out saving England's bacon and guiding his country to a glorious victory. He finished the series with 289 runs at an average of 48.16, and against Tasmania plundered the highest score of his first-class career, an unbeaten 305 out of 512 in just 210 minutes with two sixes and 43 other hits to the boundary.

In the 1912 Oval Test against Australia, which England won to emerge winners in the Triangular Tournament, Woolley played his part not with the bat, but with the ball. His accurate left-arm spin on a rain-affected wicket accounted for five Australians for the cost of 29 in the first innings, followed by a more stunning return of 5 for 20 in the second.

The First World War put a temporary stop to Woolley's career and progress, but when cricket was resumed, his bat had not lost its magic. He went with the unfortunate J.W.H.T. Douglas to Australia in 1920-

21 on a tour famous for England's defeat in all five Tests, but himself scored fairly consistently with 52 in the first Test, 50 in the second, 79 in the third, and 53 in the fifth.

The two teams returned from Australia by the same boat for the 1921 contest in England, and the home-country lost the first three Tests in succession, their batting, with the exception of Woolley, proving no match for the sheer speed and blistering hostility of the Australian speed-merchants Gregory and Macdonald. At Lord's, England's left-handed champion scaled dizzy heights of blood-royal batsmanship on a bouncing wicket. Though struck all over, he batted on with rare composure and command, stroking his way to 95 out of a total of 185 in the first innings and further punishing the quickies for a superb 93 in the second. For sheer pluck, audacity of stroke-play and skill, many would rate these innings above anything else.

Between 1921 and 1926, Woolley was at his most prolific as a run-getter. In all these years, he consistently hit over 2,000 runs in the season, but it was as late as 1928 that he enjoyed his most fruitful summer: 3,352 runs with 12 centuries at an average of 61.03. By this time, however, his bowling was on the wane, and after 1924, he never reached the 100-wicket mark in a season.

Frank Woolley played in 52 Tests without a break, between 1909 and 1926, a world record since broken by another and even more versatile left-handed all-rounder, Gary Sobers. Against South Africa, at the age of 41, he was still to reveal his matchless artistry with scores of 83 (in 115 minutes) and 95 in the Leeds Test, and 154 (his highest Test score) in only 180 minutes in the next, heading the averages with 378 at 126.00.

Woolley was tall—6' 6" (190 cm)—and played all his strokes with what appeared to be almost lackadaisical ease. He never seemed to hit the ball—he just brushed it away gently. He had a long reach which enabled him to convert the best of balls to a length of his choosing. Like Hoobs, he is never said to have made an ugly stroke in his life. Sir James Barrie once observed that

Woolley just seemed to whisper to the ball for it to go wherever he wanted!

Others believed in power-play, but Woolley's batting, though powerful in its own unique way, was clothed in the pleasing garb of charm, elegance and beauty. His batsmanship concealed the iron fist within the velvet glove.

One example of his hitting powers will suffice to display just how he plundered the bowling when in the mood: Kent were playing Somerset at Taunton and Woolley went in to face the last ball before lunch, scoring one. His terrific onslaught after the break has no parallel in cricket history. In three overs (the bowlers were J.C. White and Robertson-Glasgow), he thrashed 71 runs, thrice pulling the ball atop the pavilion. In fifteen minutes he scored 98, before being dismissed in a most tragic manner: he touched a ball which unfortunately jammed between the legs of the wicket-keeper!

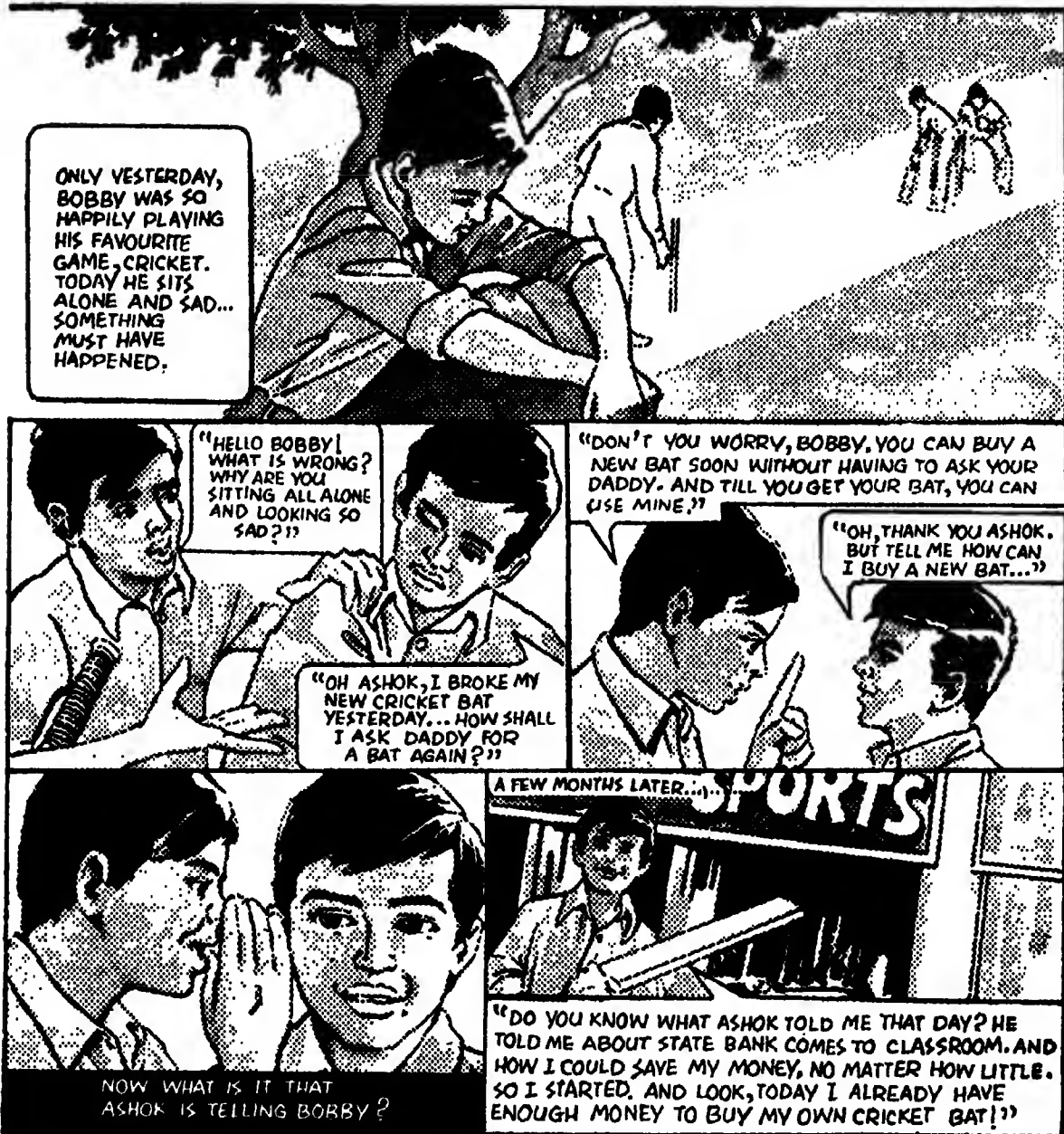
In a momentous career, which spanned 33 seasons, he made 58,969 runs at 40.75 with 145 centuries, exceeding the 1000-mark 28 times. He also took 2,068 wickets with his left-arm spin at 19.85 each. Eight times he achieved the 'double,' and his tally of 913 catches is still unsurpassed. In 64 Tests, he scored 3,283 runs (ave. 36.07) with 5 hundreds and 23 fifties. He also took 83 wickets (ave. 33.91), in addition to holding 64 catches.

But Woolley cannot be measured by the runs he made, the wickets taken or the catches held. His statistics, attractive as they are, do not tell us that throughout his career he got his runs at the breathtaking rate of 55-an-hour; that he cared nothing for mere records and that he lived only for the challenge of the game.

Woolley's figures do not tell us that he took great risks, took risks because he saw cricket as a glorious summer game, not as a tedious chess match. His true worth is to be recognised by the immense pleasure he gave to vast numbers of people who thronged to see his incomparable art season after season. This was truly art for art's sake, and Frank Woolley himself was the supreme artist.

*Mahiyar D. Morawalla*





If you are over ten years of age,  
you too can start saving when

**State Bank  
Comes to  
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**State Bank**

SBI-23-203

# KAPISH



- ANANT PAI
- MOHANDAS

THE JUNGLE OF KADU IS THE HABITAT OF MANY FINE ANIMALS LIKE BUNDILA, THE BABY ELEPHANT; BABOOCHA, THE BEAR; PINTU, THE FAWN; KAPISH AND MANY OTHERS SOME-TIMES MEN ALSO VISIT THE JUNGLE. A FREQUENT VISITOR IS DOPAYA, THE HUNTER.

LOOK, MY FRIEND! THAT IS PINTU. TAKE AIM.



POOR PINTU SUDDENLY STOPS —



THE HUNTER SEIZES THIS OPPORTUNITY...



...AND POOR PINTU FALLS TO THE GROUND.



MEANWHILE, KAPISH AND BABOOCHA, WHO WERE ON THEIR WAY TO MEET PINTU, ARE ALARMED.

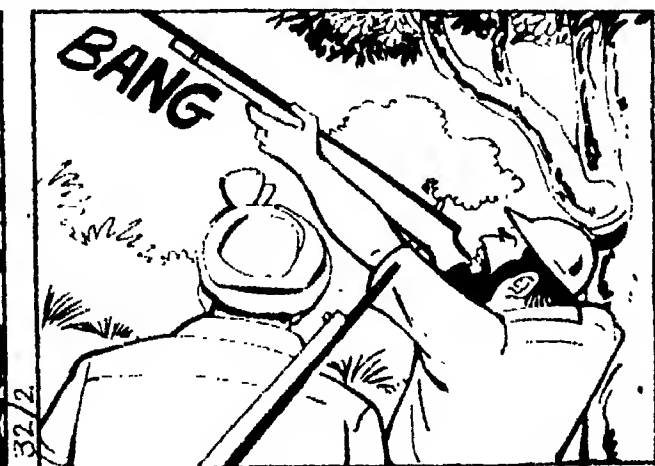
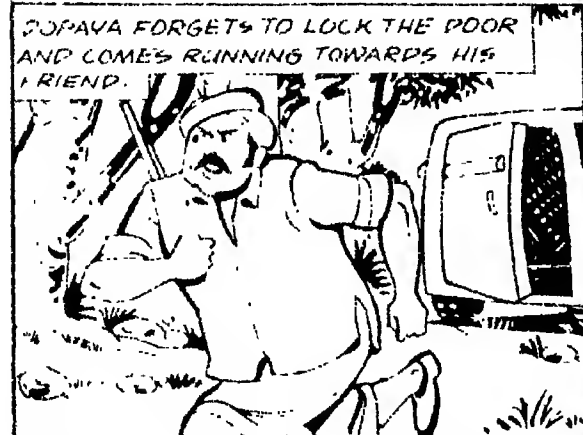
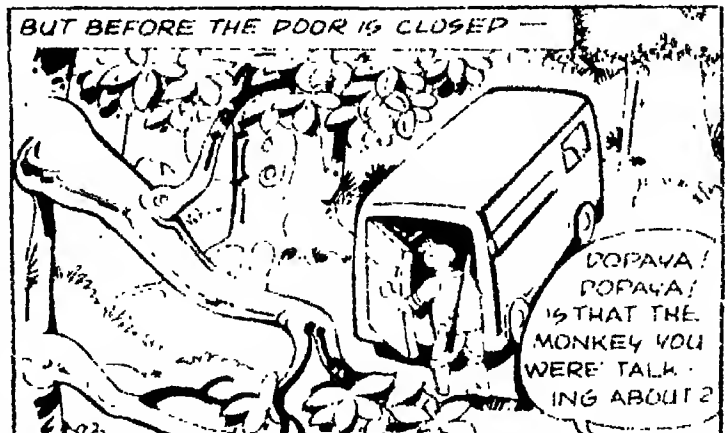
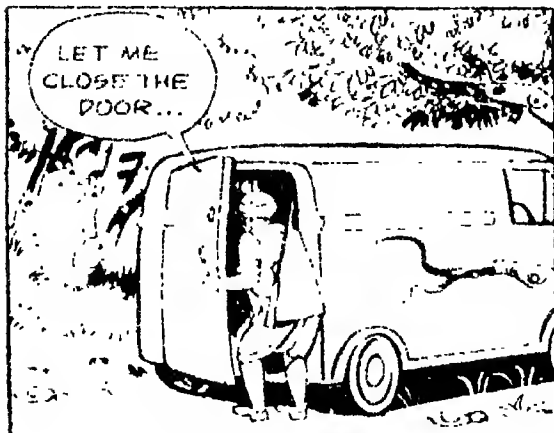


WHEN THEY GO CLOSER, THEY OVERHEAR THE HUNTER'S WORDS.

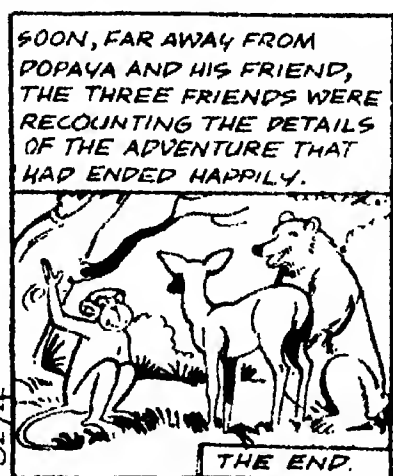
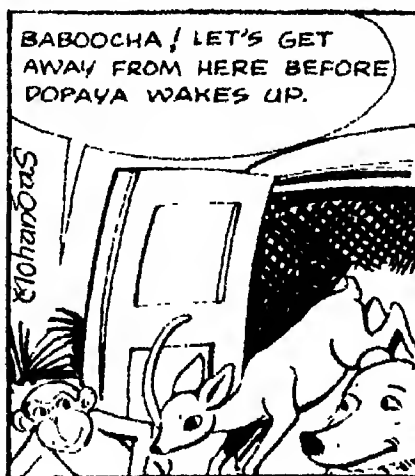


KAPISH HEAVES A SIGH OF RELIEF.









# MAGIC AND MAGICIANS



**M**AGIC is a most fascinating hobby; and magicians (of course, those who are really good artists) are fascinating people. Since 1926, I have been deeply interested in, and closely associated with, Magic and Magicians.

Why 1926? It was in the winter that year, when I was a schoolboy of fourteen, that I was greatly impressed by a full evening show by 'Roy the Mystic,' the great magician of those days. (See photograph above) For more than two hours he held his whole audience spellbound by apparently making impossible things possible. With empty hands he caught cards, coins; and cigarettes from the air; made balls after balls appear and disappear and change colour in the most bewildering fashion;

magically transferred his thought from the farthest end of the auditorium to his hypnotized and thoroughly blindfolded assistant on the stage in such a way that the girl described in detail anything (notebook, watch, pencil, key-ring, coin, button, etc.) a spectator placed in his hand; and last, but not the least, defied gravitation by making first his assistant and then a football-sized ball float in the air without any support! It was these last two items, the wonderful gravitation-defying miracles, that startled me and the other members of the audience most. We racked our brains but could not make out how he did it. And on my way back, I resolved: 'Some day, I must also become a magician like Roy the Mystic and hold my

audiences spellbound.' For Magic, I thought, is the finest art of all, being the only art which makes impossible things possible by defying or defeating all laws of nature.

On my way back, I also recalled the famous story of Newton, the discoverer of gravitation, and the apple. The apple fell at a distance from Newton, says the story; Newton saw the apple fall, thought over it, and discovered the law of gravitation. In my bewildered admiration for Roy the Mystic, I wondered what might have happened had he been there on the occasion. With his magic power, I thought, he would perhaps have kept the apple suspended in the air, preventing the fall of the apple, and thereby the discovery of gravitation.



Sounds fantastic? But such really was my thought that night on my way back from Roy the Mystic's marvels.

Luckily for me, an uncle had brought with him, on his return from abroad, a large illustrated catalogue and price-list issued by the Magic department of A.W. Gamage Ltd., London. On the cover page was a full figure photograph of the immortal David Devant, England's most beloved master magician, taken during his Royal Command performance (1912). Long before witnessing the great magic show of Roy the Mystic, long before I even heard his name, I had read through this catalogue (very aptly entitled **GAMAGIC**, punching Gamage with Magic, fascinatedly several times. Even in cold print, the descriptions of the marvellous small tricks and big illusions you could perform to mystify people were fascinating. But how tremendously exciting those very feats could be in actual performance became vivid to me only after witnessing the performance of a master like Roy the Mystic. It was his performance that, by its magic influence, made me a life-long magic-addict. I did not have even the faintest idea at the time that during the last sixteen years of his life (till his death, in his 86th year, on January 23, 1977), I would have the invaluable benefit of continual close association with him. His talks on the theory and practice of magic were as interesting as they were valuable, and his varied experiences during his long magic career are stranger than fiction. I shall narrate them for your benefit by and by.

I just mentioned David Devant, that beloved name in the history of Magic in England. In one of his autobiographical writings, he has narrated how his masterly performance of the magic trick called 'The Miser's Dream' (also known as 'The Aerial Treasury' or Multiplication of Money) in St. George's Hall, London's famous theatre for magic shows, was responsible for putting him into a very delicate and dangerous situation. The situation itself was as frightful an experience as the escape from it was delightful.

In that trick Devant, showing his hand completely empty, mysteriously caught coins not only from the air, but from here, there and everywhere, even from the most impossible and unexpected places. With his superb acting ability Devant, the master illusionist, created such an atmosphere of illusion that coins after coins seemed to materialize in the air only to be grabbed by Devant's fingers.

One evening, on his way home, Devant took a short-cut along a solitary footpath that ran through a meadow, connecting two busy streets. After covering half the length of the footpath Devant noticed a tall and robust fellow a few paces in front of him, coming from the opposite direction. The very manner of the big fellow's walking and the peculiar way in which he suddenly stopped in front of Devant and began to study his face made the magician feel uneasy. Very soon a smile of recognition lit up the fellow's face.

"Sir!" exclaimed the fellow, "aren't you the wonderful magician I saw some time back,

catching coins after coins from the air? It was wonderful, sir, wonderful! I never saw anything like it."

The fellow's loud admiration delighted Devant, though there was none else within earshot to hear it. Devant admitted his identity. Immediately, the fellow's face brightened up again, but the very next moment he suddenly became very grave and pathetic. Pointing to his worn out, shabby dress, he said he was very hard up and immediately needed money very badly.

"You must catch some coins for this poor fellow, sir, as you do on the stage," the fellow demanded. Devant tried to explain to him that what he had seen on the stage was mere make-believe, and he had no real magic power to catch coins from the air. "If I had," he explained to the fellow, "why do I have to toil on the stage to earn my livelihood?"

But he would not listen to logic. Devant must catch some coins for him immediately; otherwise he would not let Devant go any farther! Devant knew the fellow was too strong for him and would quickly catch him up if he tried to run away. And shouts for help would be useless, for there was nobody near enough to hear his shouts.

Devant secretly took a coin out of his pocket and passed it into his left hand and began his 'magical' manipulations. In due course, secretly transferring the coin to the right hand, he made a show of catching it from the air as he would to do on the stage. As soon as the coin was caught, the fellow shouted in joy, snatched the coin from Dev-

ant's hand, and became impatient for the next coin. It was clear that the mad fellow would not be satisfied with less than two or three dozen. But Devant had only five more coins with him; hence, he could catch only five more coins from the air. He must reach the end of this footpath and reach the safe zone of the crowded street before these five coins were exhausted.

Devant resorted to dilatory tactics to kill as much time as possible in catching a coin, but this aroused the fellow's suspicion and he angrily insisted on quicker action. When Devant, at last, had only one coin left, there was still a long way to go to reach the safe zone of the busy street. He felt very nervous wondering how he would manage the situation after catching this last coin from the air. Luckily, Devant did not have to face the difficulty, for a batch of eager searchers came this way, thank God, at the right time to take back this big fellow who turned out to be a run-away

person, half or three-quarters mad.

That crazy fellow had believed, because he loved to believe, that Devant's catching coins from the air was real, genuine magic, and that Devant was a real magician who could perform miracles by supernatural means. And that was why he wanted to persuade or compel Devant to catch a good number of coins for him and save him from the pangs of poverty. But Devant was not such a magician, able to perform real miracles; he was only an actor, a superb actor, playing the role of a magician.

Now, this reminds me of the immortal French magician, Robert Houdin (1805-1871), in private life Jean Eugene Robert, who has been called 'the Father of Modern Magic'. It was his favourite statement that he made in defining the function of a modern magician: "A magician is an actor playing the role of a magician." It implies that you must have good acting ability if you as-

pire to be a good magician. The better you can play the role, the better magician you are. A master magician's magic is not really real magic (i.e. miracle performed by supernatural means defying all laws of nature) but fake or imitation magic which looks like real magic but is worked by perfectly natural means.

In fact, in the domain of art (and Magic is an art, a very fine art) it is the imitation that more often fascinates us than the real thing.

With our modern scientific outlook, we do not believe in miracles, generally speaking. When a modern master of magic performs his apparent miracles, we know full well that the mystifying feats he is performing are based not on any magical, miraculous or supernatural powers but on clever trickery, only we cannot make out where the trickery or deception lies. There lies the real attraction of Magic as an art.

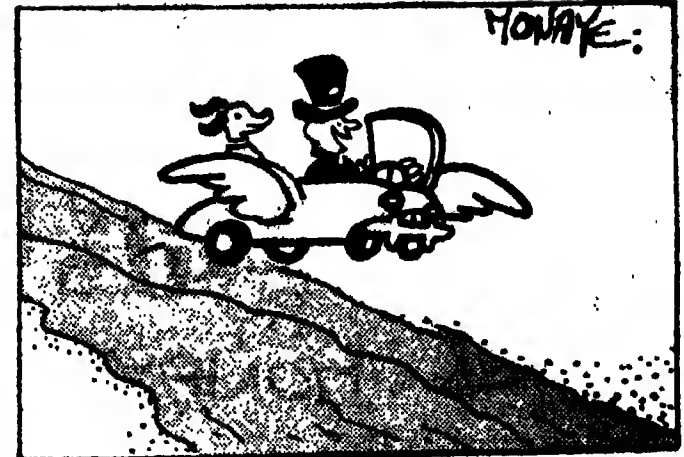
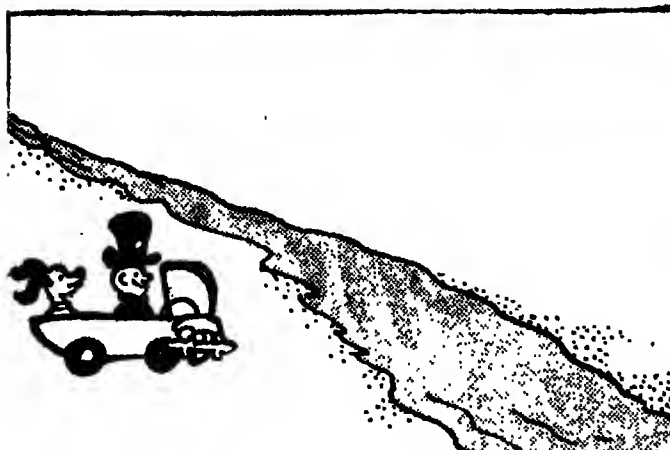
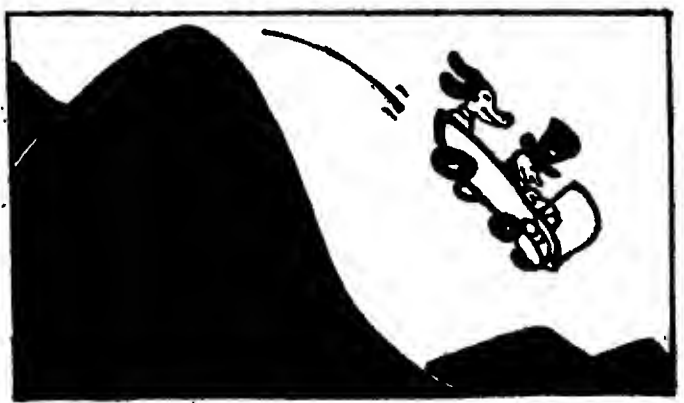
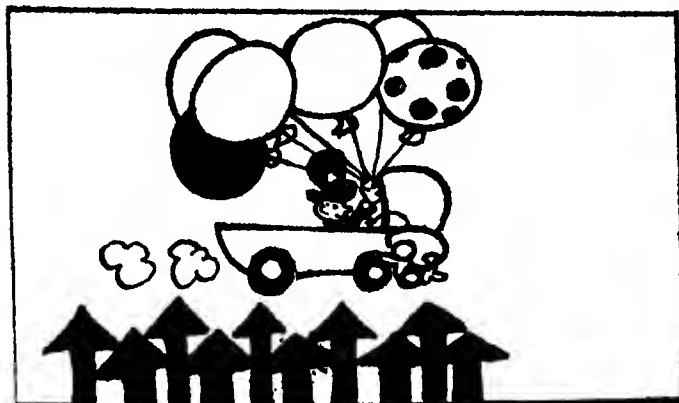
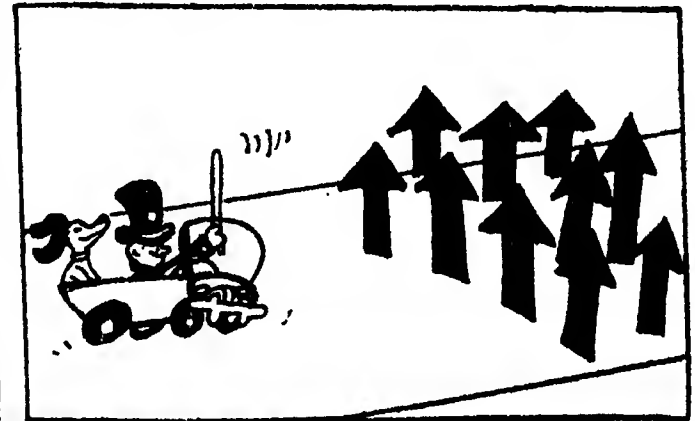
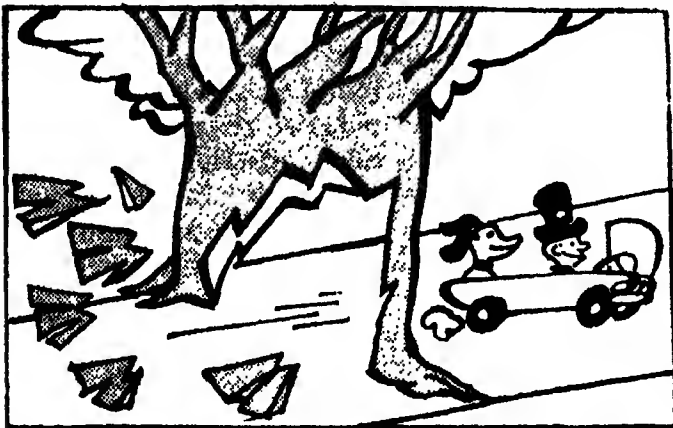
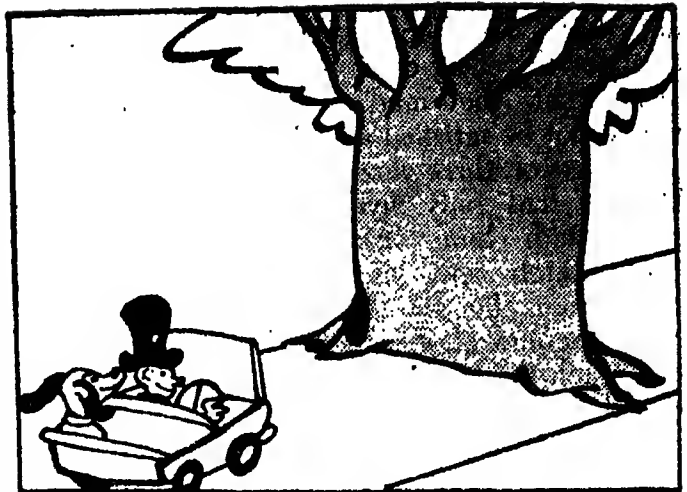
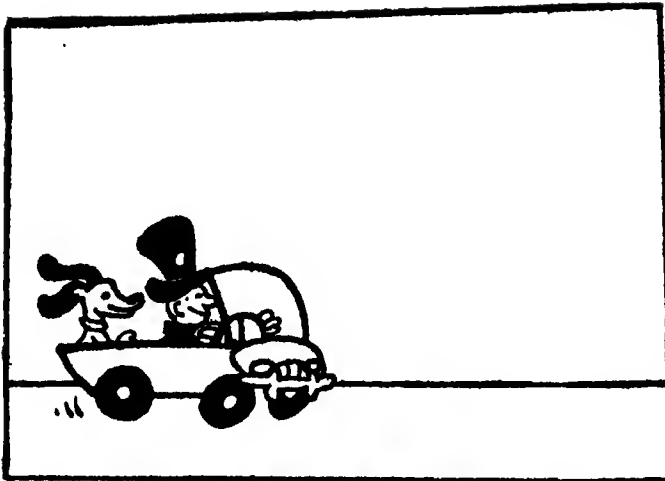
Ajit Krishna Basu

(To be continued)



(Turn over)





# PUZZLES

## BRAIN TEASERS

1. Which is the 'comb' with which you can't comb your hair?
2. Which is the 'bow' that you can't use?
3. Which is the 'devil' that doesn't frighten you?
4. Which 'rock' is soft and smooth and can be worn?
5. Which 'range' can we eat?
6. Which fruit has an ear?

*P. Shobha Ayyar (12)*

## TEST YOUR WITS

1. What is the smallest bridge in the world?
2. Why are your fingers like a hardware store?
3. What is the worst weather for cats and dogs?
4. Why did the jelly roll?
5. When do cooks become mean?
6. What is the end of everything?
7. Why did Suresh throw his clock outside the window?
8. What has eighteen legs and catches flies?

*Puneet Sabharwal*

## KNOW YOUR ANTS

1. This 'ant' has more than sufficient.
2. This 'ant' keeps records of business accounts.
3. This 'ant' is obstinate.
4. This 'ant' is a helper.
5. This 'ant' applies for jobs.
6. This 'ant' remains unchanged.
7. This 'ant' is openly disobedient.
8. This 'ant' attracts attention in a rough manner.
9. This 'ant' provides you with food and snacks (on payment, of course!)
10. This 'ant' sometimes gives such headache to housewives!

*Cheru Prakash (13)*

## RIDDLES

1. Which is proper to say: 3 plus 5 is 7, or 3 plus 5 are 7?
2. What word of seven letters will have six left after you take away four?
3. Why was Adam's first day long?
4. What is that may be found in Matthew and Mark, but not in Luke and John?
5. What three words (which read the same backwards and frontwards) might have Adam used to introduce himself to Eve?
6. What must you add to 9 to make it 6?
7. Which flower grows between the nose and the chin?
8. What is the first thing a man plants in his garden?
9. Why are flowers lazy?
10. Now what are we coming to?

*Nirmala Iyer (11)*

## WHO AM I?

1. I am a man who has life but cannot talk.
2. I have legs and hands, body and back, but neither life nor head.
3. I walk in a dark forest on a thin road.
4. I do not have life, but I have a bark, though I am not a dog.
5. I have the manners of a cow, I resemble a cow, I eat the food of a cow, but I am not a cow.
6. I live in the hair of people like lice, but I do not have life.
7. I am gold on your body; however you cannot touch me.
8. I represent a man, but I am not a monkey. I do not have life.
9. I give you news, but I can not talk to you.
10. I have neither legs nor life, yet I run.

*Nilima Rode (11) and  
Sonali Nadkarni (10)*



## FOR THE PROSPERITY OF ALL CHILDREN

**T**HE GDR, as a socialist state, is a child-loving country. Unlimited care for the younger generation is the constitutional obligation for every citizen and every institution. Already in the first hard years of the new beginning after the victory over Hitler-fascism, all progressive forces directed their particular attention to the well-being of the children. It was above all those anti-fascists, who — themselves still marked by hunger and torture suffered from in

fascist concentration-camps and jails — initiated an appeal to rescue the children. Those who had been most innocent of the criminal Second World War unleashed by Hitler-Germany, should not fall victim to that war subsequently. All those, who experienced it at that time, will never forget the aid rendered by the Soviet Army: Particularly ordered officers cared for bread, hot meals, clothes and shoes for the children. Former villas and castles, once owned by mean-

while expropriated war-criminals, were turned into homes for orphans and war-scattered children.

In the GDR, permanent care for the younger generation is a maxim of state policy. Children are wished-for and welcome. Families with many children enjoy law-regulated preferential treatment ranging from the distribution of housing-space to direct material allowances from the state. For every newly-born child, 1,000 marks of maternity benefits are paid. There are interest-free credits granted to young couples, of which 1,000 marks are remitted for each newly-born child. All over the country there exists a net work of care-centres for pregnant women and young mothers. A comprehensive vaccination-system protects the children from their first days onwards against infectious diseases, the most dangerous of which – such as poliomyelitis and diphtheria – have been uprooted already. A unified education-system guarantees a free of charge education, ranging “seamlessly” from kindergarten to possibly university-level. Child-labour has always been severely prohibited and is simply unimaginable in our country.

It cost the society many a sacrifice to achieve and secure all this, particularly in the first years. From year to year the funds have risen, which have been provided for children by the state budget. At present the money is above all spent on the further extension of leisure-time and recreation-centres, for example, holiday-camps of the “Young Pioneers” – children’s organisation – and of the nationally-owned enterprises.

In every residential area there exist playgrounds for everyday leisure-time. In new housing areas the establishment of such playgrounds is part and parcel of the state-ordered building-project. In every bigger town or village there exist “Young-Pioneers” – houses or at least respective rooms, where the kids can participate in and enjoy manifold extra-school hobby-groups.

The GDR’s children’s and youth-books, too,

enjoy, good international reputation. A special publishing house, the “Kinderbuchverlag” (children’s books publishers), sees to the publication and the care for the authors. Almost three quarters of all children between 7 and 14 years of age are permanent readers of children’s libraries. In many cases these libraries take care of even the smallest villages by sending there regularly mobile book-buses. As in the case of adults-libraries, for children too the borrowing of books is free of charge. Four special journals for children, published in addition to other publication by the “Junge-Welt” Publishing House, help to appease the children’s hunger for books. These journals are adjusted to the state-curricula and to projects of the pioneers-organisation and impart additional knowledge to the individual age-groups.

Children are a nation’s most valuable treasure – this maxim is pursued by the GDR in the international arena, too. In the framework of UNICEF, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, the GDR acts as part of the socialist community of states, whose consistent peace-policy, whose striving for security and social progress corresponds to the humanist principles of UNICEF. The GDR considers the work of this UN-sub-organisation extraordinarily useful and necessary. Special attention is devoted to UNICEF-special-emergency-programmes, above all through bi-lateral agreements with the states and bodies concerned.

Of course, the GDR also renders material support to the work of the emergency-fund. Every year our government renders its financial contribution. Since 1976 participation in the UNICEF-post-card-campaigns, too, raises additional funds. GDR-assistance is focussed on children and youths in the developing countries, until today suffering from the consequences of colonial oppression and exploitation.

*Issued by the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic*

# JOKES • HA! HA! • LAUGH AWHILE • LET'S LAUGH

Jenning phoned his wife from the office one afternoon and announced that he had bought two tickets for the theatre.

"That's wonderful," she exclaimed, "I'll start getting ready at once."

"Yes, please do," said her husband calmly, "the tickets are for tomorrow night."

*Vera Kidwai (12)*

Tramp: Can you give a poor fellow a bite?

Housewife: I don't bite anyone, but I'll call the dog.

*Manish K. Shah*

Thomas had the habit of bunking school. Once, when a circus came to town, he wanted to bunk school and see it. He stayed at home one morning and phoned his headmaster.

Thomas: Sir, Thomas won't be attending school today.

Headmaster: That's all right. Who's speaking?

Thomas: My father.

*Suresh Hariharan (12)*

Big Girl: Do you know how to spell banana?

Little Girl: Yes, but I don't know when to stop!

Mike: Have you heard, I have a new baby sister.

Ike: What's her name?

Mike: I don't know. She won't tell me.

Visitor: Well, Emily, tell me what are you going to do when you grow up to be a big lady like your mummy?

Emily: Diet, of course.

Teacher: Really, Dexter, your handwriting gets worse every day!

Dexter: Well, miss, if I write any better, you'd just find fault with my spellings.

Teacher: Dudley, can you tell me what the four seasons are?

Dudley: Salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar.

Diner: Just give me a ham sandwich.

Waitress: With pleasure.

Diner: No, with mustard.

*Shuba Rao (10)*

Red-faced Agent: Do you serve lobsters?

Waiter: Yes, sir, we serve anybody.

"Why do you keep your dolls so carefully, sister?"

"I'm keeping them for my children."

"What if you don't have any?"

"Then, I'll give them to my grandchildren."

*Jayshree Sethuraman*

Principal: I have power to fine you, I have power to suspend you, I have power to expel you. Where do you think you are?

Student: In the power-house, sir!

A: I am sorry to hear that your factory was burnt down. By the way, what were you manufacturing?

B: Fire extinguishers.

*Abhinav Kapoor (13)*

Man: I can catch the 6.30 bus if I cut across your field.

Farmer: If my bull sees you, you will even catch the 6.15 bus.

A middle-aged teacher was teaching grammar in the class. She asked a girl: "I am beautiful. What is the tense?"

The girl thought for a minute and replied: "Past tense, miss."

Teacher: If I borrow from your father one thousand rupees and pay back a hundred rupees a month, how much will I owe him in five months?

Sita: A thousand rupees, miss.

Teacher: You don't understand arithmetic.

Sita: You don't understand my father, miss.

Question: Who are the best book-keepers?

Answer: Those who never return books.

*Seema Siddiqui (10)*

# LAUGHTER THE BEST MEDICINE • IT'S CRAZY!

# To the Memory of A "Lion"

**T**ANAJI MULUSARE was Sivaji's childhood friend and companion at arms. He was very brave and daring. Sivaji proudly called him his 'Singh.' Tanaji had planned and fought many a battle by the side of his leader. They were determined to free their land from the Mughal domination.

Tanaji lived in the small town of Umratha. One morning, Umratha wore a festive look. There were colourful buntings fluttering in the streets. 'Mangal Kalas' had been kept at every door. Tanaji's son was to get married that day. People were going in and out of his house, busy on their errands.

One of the men saw a rider galloping down the street. "Look! Look!" he cried out and pointed at the rider. "What news can





he be bringing?" he asked Tanaji's personal servant standing by his side. Before the servant could reply, the rider came to a stop in front of them. He leapt off his horse and said, "Where is Tanaji? I must see him at once."

"In the house," answered Tanaji's servant. He had recognised the rider. "Sir, I will take you to him."

"Tanaji!" the servant called out.

Tanaji and his wife were busy selecting and packing clothes and ornaments for the bride and the groom.

"Who is there?" he asked.

"Suryaji," replied the servant.

Tanaji put aside the jewel-box he was holding and stepped forward. "Come in, Suryaji."

Suryaji entered and bowed to Tanaji and his wife.

"Welcome, my friend. What brings you here?" Tanaji asked. His wife, too, stopped opening the sari she had in her hand.

"Raje wants you at Raigarh immediately," replied Suryaji.

Tanaji understood that it must be something serious. He turned swiftly to his wife and put his hand affectionately on her shoulder. "My dear," he said, "you know I have to go. Let the wedding be postponed. My first duty is to my leader and my land. Come, smile and bid me farewell. Do not worry. Suryaji and my men will be with me."

Tanaji's wife was stunned. She held back her tears.

"Don't worry about me," she said and went in to prepare the 'tilak' and 'arti' for the farewell.

Tanaji buckled on his sword and stepped out of the room. He ordered his men to get ready quickly to accompany him. The news spread all over and soon they assembled before his house.

Tanaji's wife applied tilak on his forehead and showed the 'arti.' Tanaji took leave of her.

Leading an army of horsemen, Tanaji rode fast and reached the Raigarh fort.

Tanaji walked straight into Sivaji's room and found him sitting in a pensive mood.

"Raje, I'm here at your service," said Tanaji bowing.

"Oh! my Singh has come?" said Sivaji. He embraced Tanaji and continued, "Come, sit down. I have a very difficult task on my hands. Ma Sahib feels that my other forts are not safe until the Kondana fort, now held by our enemies, is back in our hands."

Sivaji paused for a while, and continued. "Udai Singh Rathor is in command of the Mughal forces. His men are guarding the three gates. His sons are also with him. All of them are brave fighters. There is also the killer elephant Chandrawati. She is a force by herself. I have thought and thought, but can't find a way of capturing the fort. You are the only one who may be able to find a way."

The lines on Tanaji's brow deepened. Then he spoke. "I have a plan. With the blessings of Goddess Bhawani and Ma Sahib, we will succeed. The fort is guarded only on three sides. We will try to enter from the fourth side, the west."

"What?" Sivaji sprang up. "Enter from the west? You're not planning to climb that precipice? It is unassailable."

Tanaji said coolly, "No, Raje, it is not, the way I intend to do it." He then explained to Sivaji everything in detail.

"It is a daring plan," said Sivaji anxiously. "Very difficult to execute. All depends on just one thing."

"Yes, it is difficult, Raje, but not impossible. We will prepare well and we will succeed." Tanaji sounded confident.

"Very well, go ahead with your preparations. May Goddess Bhawani bless you," Sivaji said at last.

Tanaji bowed to Sivaji and left. He called Suryaji and some of his personal friends who were waiting in the adjoining room. He swore them to secrecy and then told them of the plan.

"We begin preparing at once. Drill the soldiers, perfect them in the use of arms, but do not tell them for what. Everything depends on surprise."

Soon everything was ready. Tanaji called his friends, and announced, "Tonight we attack. It is a moonless night and nothing will be visible. All of you must be absolutely silent as you approach the Kondana fort. I will take the iguana Yashwanti. With her help, we will scale the rock." Then he turned to Suryaji. "Suryaji, you are to take the rest of the men and wait at the Kalyan Gate. We will throw open that for you to come in."

Some more preparations were made and they marched towards the fort as quietly as shadows. In a short time they reached the foot of the precipice. Tanaji tied a rope to Yashwanti's neck. Then he threw her up hard so that she could clutch the wall. But the iguana lost her grip and slithered down.

"Oh, it is a sign of bad luck!" exclaimed one of the soldiers.

Tanaji whirled round. "Who said that? There is no place for superstition in a soldier's life. He must only have faith, in himself and in God."

Tanaji once again hurled the iguana up with greater force. This time Yashwanti gripped the top of the fort wall. Tanaji breathed a sigh of relief. "Hand me the bag containing the ropes," said Tanaji. A soldier gave it to him and he slung it on his back.

"I am going up first. I will tie these ropes to the projections on the wall and let them down. All of you can come up with their help. Remember, you should not make any sound."

Tanaji held the rope tight and began to climb. He climbed fast and reached the ramparts. The soldiers followed him.

Within a few minutes they reached the top.

Tanaji whispered, "There must be a number of lookout guards posted on the ramparts. Take them unawares and silence them. They should not be allowed to give the alarm. We'll get down and attack the soldiers inside the fort. Let's go."

Tanaji's soldiers overpowered the fort guards in no time. He, along with some soldiers, now rushed to attack the fort soldiers. With shouts of 'Jai Bhawani', they rushed and attacked the Mughals. They fought them

hand to hand.

One of the Mughal soldiers quietly slipped out and rushed to inform the sleeping Uday Singh.

"The Marathas! They have entered my fort? But how?" cried Uday Singh.

He sprang up from his bed and rushed to the next apartment shouting, "Wake up, my sons. Tell the mahout to set the elephant Chandrawati and let her crush them."

Uday Singh's sons joined in the battle and the mahout charged with Chandrawati. The Marathas fought daringly, caring neither for wounds nor death. The elephant and Uday Singh's all three sons perished in no time. Tanaji moved forward to capture Uday Singh.

Uday Singh had by then heard of the death of his sons and the elephant; he rushed into the fray. "Tanaji, you have a lot to answer for. You'll not escape me."

"Nor you from me," cried Tanaji and flew towards Uday Singh.

Both were brilliant swordsmen. They closed in and fell away. Both were soon covered with wounds. All this while, the battle raged fiercely around them. The attackers had got the better of the defenders. Some of the Marathas threw open the Kalyan Gate. Though weak from bleeding, Uday Singh made a gallant effort and plunged his sword into Tanaji's chest. Tanaji fell down. After a while he sprang up and inflicted a mortal wound on a smiling Uday Singh. He died at once. Tanaji, too, soon breathed his last.

It was all quiet when Suryaji entered the fort. He rushed to search out Tanaji, and was shocked to see him lying bleeding. He bent down to listen to his heartbeat but his leader was dead already.

He looked helplessly at his friend with grief, but his grief soon turned into anger. "We must complete your task." So saying he left Tanaji's body alone and started fighting more vigorously.

The Marathas, angered by the death of Tanaji, fell on their foes like tigers. Uday Singh's death had taken the fight out of the



Mughals. After a brief struggle, the Marathas won the day. The Kondana fort was once again in their hands.

Suryaji returned to Raigarh fort to inform Sivaji of their victory. He was anxiously waiting for them.

"Raje, the fort is taken," said Suryaji.

"Oh, very good. But where is Tanaji?" Sivaji asked. Suryaji hung his head and remained silent.

"Speak, Suryaji!" Sivaji anxiously asked, as he shook him by his shoulder. "What has

happened to him?"

"He was killed!" Suryaji said in broken tones.

Sivaji's face paled as he mumbled, "The fort is won, but my lion is dead!" He turned and walked over to the window. He stood there silent, looking out.

A memorial to Tanaji now stands on the spot where he fell. It is called "Singh Garh."

*T. Tiwari*

*(Courtesy: Writers Workshop)*

## THE GOD, MYSELF AND THE EXAMINATION

**M**Y GOD! The examination is fast approaching. The whole year has passed off in a flick, and now I must study, really study as never before. Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Hindi, English—so many books—so many notebooks. My God! Oh, my God! They look like tall peaks of the Himalayas—invincible, unscalable. My God! What shall I do? How will I pass? My God! My God! My God!!!

"Well, here I am."

"Don't disturb me."

"But you called me."

"I didn't. I said—My God."

"Well, that's who I am."

"What? From where the hell have you come?"

"Not from hell. I came from heaven!"

"There is no heaven. There is only hell and that is examination."

"But I really came from heaven because you called me."

I blinked. There he was standing wrapped up in a silken 'dhoti', bare chest, and lot of 'chandan' on his forehead. Of course, no four hands and three heads, etc. Quite a handsome chap, on the whole. I looked at him up and down, and he got nervous. I suddenly laughed, "What happened? Your drama company has failed or what?"

"Don't you believe I am God?"

"Do you think I am that silly? First tell me, how did you get into my room? The door and windows are closed."

"Doors and windows are meant for you mortals. We, Gods, can just pass thro' them."

"Then just pass out thro' them and allow me to study."

And he really went out thro' the closed window.

"Hey, God! Come back. Don't you understand a joke? By the way, just to assure my trembling feet, you are not a ghost by any chance?"

"Ghosts? I can burn them off just by looking at them. Shall I show you how I can burn off things? I can burn all your books in a second."

"OH God! No—no—no."

"Why are you shouting 'Oh God— — Oh God' when I am already here?"

"You won't understand that. All these years, you never bothered about me and now, you come and fire me. Anyway, I still don't believe that you are God. I will call Mummy and ask her."

"No— — no don't! She won't be able to see me. I am visible only to you."

"Really? Then, in the exams, you can dictate to me the answers; the examiner won't see you and then I will really believe you."

"That is cheating. I don't do that."

"Everybody cheats nowadays and— — I want to pass."

"So then study hard."

"But I hardly study."

"That is the whole trouble. Why don't you ask me for a boon—something good and big?"

"I asked for a small favour and you refused. Now you want me to ask for something good and big. What can I ask? There are hundreds of things I want. I shall have to put all the questions to a computer and find out the best one."

"What is a computer?"

"You don't know a computer? Well, you see, earlier people in distress used to call you for help and you would come and solve all the problems for them. But nowadays, you never even bother to listen, so people run to the computer machine. It is a sort of a demi-God. It answers hell-of-a-lot of questions."

"Don't talk of hell, when I am here. Anyway, I had made your brains quite efficient to tackle all problems."

"That may be true for your time. We can't store all available information in our brains. Why, I am sure, you won't pass if you appear for the exam together with me. Science has advanced so much."

"Don't talk nonsense. You know I have created this universe. I have no beginning—no end. I am in everything and everywhere. What you think 'new' is new to you because of your ignorance— — —I— — —"

"Wait, wait! Stop all that lecture. I am fed up studying my class theorems. Don't you add philosophy to that. You may come during my vacation and tell me all the philosophy you want."

"This is not philosophy. It is real life for me. Anyway, I must go now."

"Hey! Wait. What about my examination?"

"Well what about it?"

"Now that we are friends, will you not help me?"

"You don't want anything else?"

"No! Not at present."

"Well, I herewith give you a boon that anything you read ten times, you will remember it forever."

So saying he simply vanished.

"God! Hey God! Come back. You think you are funny? You think I have the patience to read anything ten times?"

Hey— — — —!

"What are you shouting for God? You didn't study for the whole year and now you are calling him to help you. Better concentrate on your study," Mother said from the other room.

Now I have got to study, but if you see God anywhere, please send him to me. I would like to tell him a few funny things myself.

*Rita Pohray*

# PEN-FRIENDS CORNER

**G**IVEN below are the names of some of the boys and girls who have been newly enrolled as members of the CHILDREN'S WORLD PEN FRIENDS CLUB. Each one of them has been given a membership number. The country in which the member desires to have pen-friends is shown within brackets. All members of our Pen-Friends Club should quote their membership number whenever they correspond with us and with each other. Members may choose their pen-friends from the list of names that will appear periodically.

2119 (A)  
Siddiqua Abdulrahim (girl, 12 years)  
B/4, Hind Floor, Corner Flats  
Prabhudas Thakkar College  
Road

Paldi, Ahmedabad 380 007  
Hobbies: Needlework, reading  
(W. Germany, Japan)

2120 (U)  
Ajit Unnikrishnan (boy, 13)  
D/437 Raghbir Nagar  
New Delhi 110 027  
Hobbies: Pop music, coins  
(Britain, Australia)

2121 (G)  
Avneet Gujral (g, 8)  
1031, Sector 24 B  
Chandigarh 160 023  
Hobbies: Painting, cooking  
(France, Scandinavia)

2122 (A)  
S. Ahokan (b, 10)  
10 New Street  
Chetput, Madras 600 031  
Hobbies: Collecting magazines  
(Malaysia)

2123 (B)  
Ayvar T.P. Bhagyalakshmi (g, 12)  
4, JOEAL House  
156 Sion Road East  
Bombay 400 022  
Hobbies: Reading, writing  
(U.S.A.)

2124 (J)  
Lucy James (g, 14)  
Samsons Quarters,  
Zion Hill, Dehu Road  
District Poona, India  
Hobbies: Reading, writing  
(Holland)

2125 (J)  
Thomas Joseph (b, 10)  
217 FACT (CD) Township  
Post Ambalamedu, via Cochin  
682 303 India  
Hobbies: Gardening, stamps  
(Britain)

2126 (H)  
Priti Nemji Rambhla (g, 13)  
1st Floor, Tej Kiran  
4 Naoroji Hill Road  
Bombay 400 009  
Hobbies: Music, sports  
(Italy, Sweden)

2127 (K)  
Mukesh Kriplani (b, 13)  
4564/A, Saraswati Niketan  
16 Daryaganj, New Delhi 2  
Hobbies: Stamps, FD covers  
(Japan, Nigeria)

2128 (B)  
K. Balakrishnan (b, 15)  
Parambil Veedu  
Kaikulangara, Altharamydu  
North Quilon 13  
Kerala, India  
Hobbies: Photography  
(Russia)

Mauoj Kr. Singh (b, 13)  
C/o Mr N.K. Singh  
Qr. No. D-8, I.E.L., Gomia  
Bihar, India  
Hobbies: Photography  
(Germany, USSR)

2130 (A)  
N. Tajo Antony (b, 14)  
Qr. No. 3B, Street 15  
Sector 10, Bhilai 1  
Madhya Pradesh, India  
Hobbies: Stamps  
(Japan, USA)

2131 (G)  
N. Sateesh Chandra Govind (b, 14)  
C/o Mr N. Govinda Reddy  
Asst. Engineer, Nagari  
Chittoor Dt., Andhra Pradesh  
Hobbies: Stamps  
(Japan, Brazil)

2132 (A)  
S. Anaravathi (g, 13)  
C/o Mr J.V. Subbaraman  
Geologist,  
Dalmiapuram 621 651  
Hobbies: Stamps  
(Japan)

2133 (P)  
Rahul Pathak (b, 10)  
G-10 M.A.R. Hostel  
New Delhi 110 011  
Hobbies: Reading, writing  
(India)

2134 (K)  
Harpreet Kohli (b, 13)  
House No. 3359, Sector 19-D  
Chandigarh 160 019  
Hobbies: Viewcards, coins  
(Any country)

2135 (K)  
V. Harihara Kumar (b, 9)  
67/A Marredpally,  
Secunderabad 500 026  
Hobbies: Stamps, stickers  
(U.S.A.)

2136 (M)  
Madhumita Mukherjee (g, 14)  
G-1230 Chittaranjan Park  
Kalkaji, New Delhi 110 019  
Hobbies: Music, dance  
(England, Sweden)

2137 (S)  
Shabnam Sachdeva (g, 14)  
T-19 INA Colony  
New Delhi 110 023  
Hobbies: Cricket  
(Australia, England)

2138 (S)  
Lina Sawhney (g, 14)  
C/o Mr. D.R. Sawhney  
Qr. No. 5B, Street 7, Sector 10  
Bhilai 1 (India)  
Hobbies: Reading  
(Canada, USA)

2139 (T)  
Sharnila Tandon (g, 11)  
D/255 Defence Colony  
New Delhi 110 024  
Hobbies: Stamps, Coins  
(England)

2140 (J)  
S.R. Jaikrishnan (b, 10)  
C/o Mr M.P. Raghavan  
B/172 Sector 7  
Rourkela 3  
Sundargarh District (Orissa)  
Hobbies: Reading, drawing  
(India)

2141 (A)  
Animesh Aurora (b, 10)  
12/17 East Patel Nagar  
New Delhi 110 008  
Hobbies: Reading, cricket  
(Russia)

2142 (S)  
Arun Jacob Silas (b, 12)  
C/o Dr E.G. Silas  
Vijaya Raman Menon Road  
Ernakulam, Cochin 16  
Hobbies: Reading, music  
(Japan)

2143 (S)  
Sunil Sinha (b, 13)  
C/o Mr M.C.P. Sinha  
Street 35, Quarter 4A, Sector 5  
Bhilai (Madhya Pradesh)  
Hobbies: Photography, stamps  
(West Germany)

2144 (V)  
Harshita Venkateswaran (g, 13)  
E-247 Greater Kailash II  
New Delhi 110 048  
Hobbies: Coins, Painting  
(Japan, Spain)

2145 (S)  
J. Sundaresan (h, 13)  
E-437 Devnagar, Karol Bagh  
New Delhi 110 005  
Hobbies: Stamps, Painting  
(USA, Japan)

2146 (B)  
Arvind Baliga (h, 10)  
C-12 Guruseva Pandurangawadi  
Goregaon East, Bombay 63  
Hobbies: Stamps, reading

2147 (S)  
Chitra Sachdev (g, 14)  
10/17 Kalkaji Extension  
New Delhi 110 019  
Hobbies: Gardening, swimming  
(France, England)

2148 (S)  
Srinivas Subramanian (b, 13)  
C/o Mr P.V. Subramanian  
P.O. Indian Explosives Ltd.  
Gomia (Bihar)  
Hobbies: Reading, play-acting  
(Japan)

2149 (S)  
Ravi Sankrit (b, 10)  
M-187 Greater Kailash II  
New Delhi 110 048  
Hobbies: Reading, cricket  
(Australia)

2150 (G)  
Praful P. Gandhi (b, 16)  
Laxmi Nivas, 2nd Floor  
Block No. 3, M.G. Road  
Chhatkopar West, Bombay  
400 086  
Hobbies: Stamps, Coins  
(USA, USSR)

2151 (K)  
Atul Kakar (b, 11)  
31 South Patel Nagar  
New Delhi 110 008  
Hobbies: Drawing, stamps  
(Holland)

2152 (R)  
Rajeev Rewari (b, 12)  
15/75 Old Rajindra Nagar  
New Delhi 110 060  
Hobbies: Stamps, coins  
(Japan, New Zealand)

2153 (U)  
Vibhii Mittal (b, 12)  
C/o Dr O.P. Mittal  
CIBA-Geigy  
Corlim, Ilhas, Goa  
Hobbies: Craft, Coins  
(France, Laos)

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EDITOR

#### CHILDREN'S WORLD PEN-FRIENDS' CLUB

Dear Editor,

I would like to be a member of the Children's World Pen-Friends' Club. My subscriber No. is—

Name: Master/Miss \_\_\_\_\_  
(IN BLOCK LETTERS)

\_\_\_\_\_ (age\*) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

Pen-friend wanted in (Country) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Age limit: 16 years

Signature

## THE JUMBO HAS A MIGHTY FALL

Proud and naughty Jumbo grumbled  
When he upon a boulder stumbled  
And the shaken earth rumbled.  
His brand new coat was crumpled  
His shopping bag had tumbled  
The cakes and goodies all crumbled.  
And to his feet he fumbled  
In vain, in vain he mumbled  
His silly pride now totally humbled.

*Usha Gopinathan*

## TONIC IN TORMENT

When nothing is with you  
HOPE, sure, is with you;  
When none is by your side  
GOD is certainly by your bedside;  
You are never, ne'er just lonely  
You are not the sufferer 'only';  
LORD isn't to 'you' unkind  
Every soul he does ever mind;  
So, have heart and faith my brother, dear  
Barring wrongs you perpetrate  
nothing you need fear.

*Homai Sauna*

## Answers to Puzzles

*(See page 77)*

### Brain Teasers

1. Honeycomb, 2. Rainbow, 3. Printer's Devil,  
4. Frock, 5. Orange, 6. Pear.

### Test Your Wits

1. The bridge of your nose, 2. Because they  
have nails, 3. When it is raining cats and  
dogs, 4. It saw the apple turnover, 5. When  
they beat the eggs and whip the cream,  
6. The letter 'g', 7. He wanted to see time  
fly, 8. A baseball team.

### Know Yours Ants

1. Abundant, 2. Accountant, 3. Adamant,  
4. Assistant, 5. Applicant, 6. Constant,  
7. Defiant, 8. Blatant, 9. Restaurant, 10.  
Servant.

### Riddles

1. Neither, because 3 plus 5 make 8, 2. Six-  
teen, 3. Because there was no Eve, 4. The  
alphabet 'a', 5. "Madam, I'm Adam", 6. The  
letter 'S'. Put down IX the Roman way of

writing 9. Then put an S in front of it, and  
it becomes SIX. 7. Tulips, 8. His foot, 9.  
Because you'll always find them in beds,  
10. The end of the riddles!

### Who Am I?

1. A dumb man, 2. A chair, 3. Louse, 4. A  
tree, 5. A calf, 6. Dandruff, 7. Sunshine, 8. A  
doll, 9. Newspaper, 10. Water.

A father was beating his son very severely.  
He was also calling him by names like 'you  
arthopode', 'blistering Bernades', 'mashed  
potatoes', and 'limping tadpole'.

His son was quite shaken, and after a few  
moments, he said: "Dad, I don't mind the  
awful smacking, but please don't copy those  
names from Tin Tin comics. It's worse."

*Chaitanya K. Prasad (14)*

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*(See pages 21-24)*





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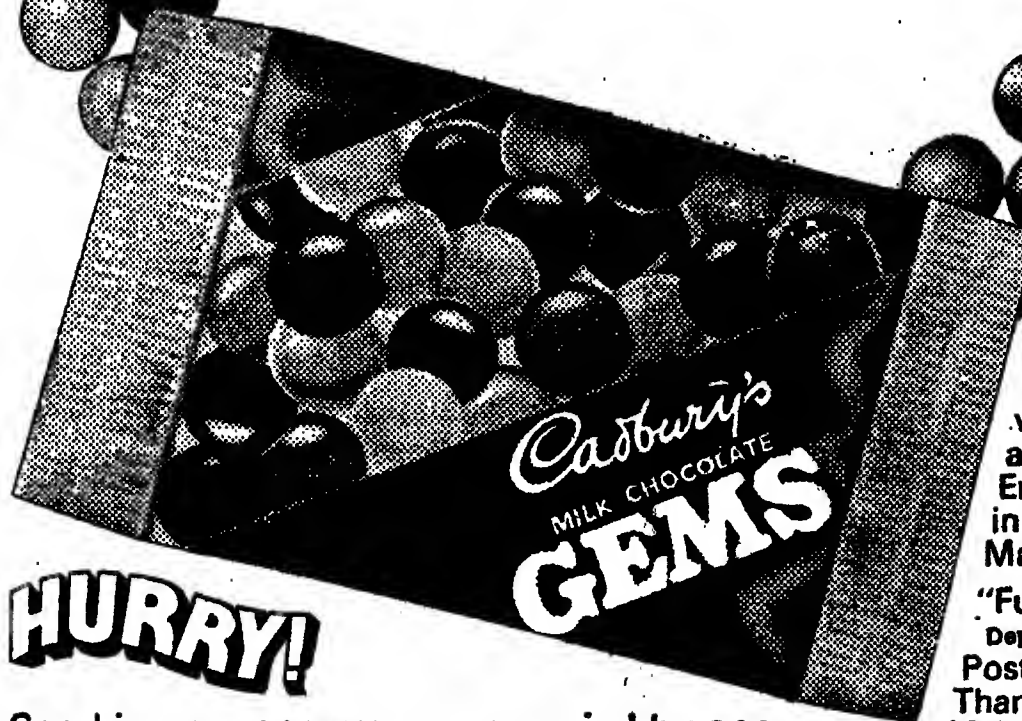
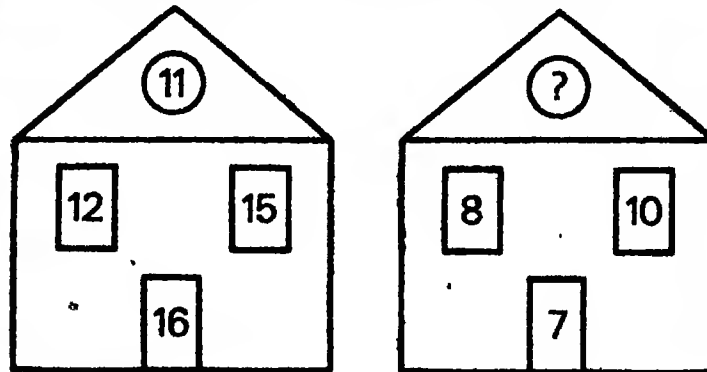
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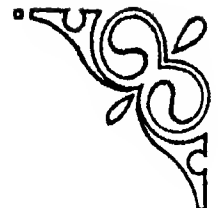
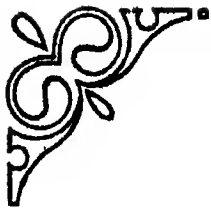
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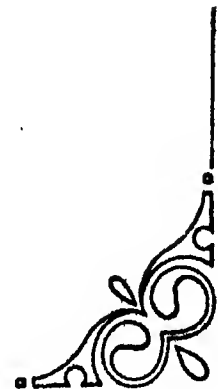
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Cover: Two of the tens of thousands of children who participated in the Shankar's On-the-Spot Painting Competition, 1978

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# THE MAGIC SOAP

WE couldn't get enough of it — of the swirling colours, the sprinkling of water, the splashing and swooshing, the sloshing and swishing, of hurling water balloons and shooting with water pistols, at everything that moved, at cars and cycles, at bullock-carts and bullocks, at horses, cats, and dogs. We spared nobody, nothing.

It was Holi, and we were having real fun — Mohinder, Kishen, Geeta and I. We threw colours at ourselves, tried to put colours on father and mother, and most of all on our Aunt Sheila, who crying, "I hate, I hate, I hate Holi!" ran and locked herself in her room. But we loved it and we played it; we just couldn't get tired of it.

We were throwing another bucket of water

over Mohinder. Just then we heard the roar of a motorbike racing down the street.

"Hey!" cried Mohinder. "Look at that guy. Doesn't he look swell?"

We took our guns, balloons, and the buckets of water and ran towards the gate, ready for another attack.

The man on the motorbike looked most hilarious! A pair of black, mischievously sparkling eyes stared out of a completely blue face; his hair shone a bright orange, and his arms were the colour of a parrot. This strange man waved out to us and slid to a halt right in front of our gate.

"Hold it, kids," he cried, "I'm coming inside."

He was none else but our Uncle Vinod, my



father's brother, young and tall and most colourful

"Uncle, you look wow!" cried Mohinder.

"Yes, Uncle, you're looking smashing," we all agreed. "Please give us some of your colours."

Uncle Vinod, however, shouted, "Beware, these colours are fast. In fact, they're dyes from our textile factory. They don't wash, they don't even fade, they stay as brilliant for ever."

"For ever?" we cried. "Now, will you look like that for ever?"

"Yes," answered Uncle proudly, "don't you like me like this?"

We liked him like that very much, why we, too, wanted to look like him, if possible even more colourful. So, the battle started all over again. Uncle Vinod rubbed pink colour on our hair, while we painted his nose red. We dipped our hands again and again into his plastic bags full of dyes, and painted him and ourselves more colourful than a Red Indian chief.

Suddenly, we heard our little sister Geeta cry from behind the hollyhocks in our garden.

"Geeta!" we called her. "Come out. What has happened?"

She slowly emerged from behind the flowers. With tears in her eyes, she mumbled, "I don't want to look like this all my life. Everybody'll laugh at me."

But that did not bother us. However, Uncle Vinod bent down, put his green arms around her, and whispered something into her ear. Suddenly, her face brightened.

"Oh, really?" she beamed at him. "A magic soap?" And she threw her arms around his neck and kissed his blue cheeks so hard that her lips took on the same colour.

"And, now," said Uncle, "let's see what your mother is doing on this Holi day."

We ran towards the main door. Uncle pushed it open and boomed, "Where are you two hiding, my brave sisters-in-law? Will you come out or shall I come in to fetch you?"

From inside the kitchen, we heard mother drop a spoon, while Aunt Sheila cried from her room, "Go away, Vinod, I know you're looking ghastly."

We shouted in protest, "No, Uncle Vinod looks wonderful, absolutely divine."

"Vinod," we heard mother's distressed cry, "stay out. Mind my carpets, please!"

"All right, all right," laughed Uncle, "I'm going out. I'll count ten. And if you don't come out by then, I can guarantee nothing."

Turning to us he said, "All right kids, here we go, one, two, three."

"One," we joined in the counting, "two, three..." We began shouting inside the house so loudly that the windows seemed to shatter.

"No, no, I'm not coming," cried Aunt Sheila from her room, while mother just shrieked and shrieked. "Wait, Vinod, wait! Give us a second."

But we continued undisturbed, "Four, five..." "Vinod, Vinod!" cried mother desperately. "Wait, wait please."

"Six, seven, eight," we went on, and chuckled at all the noise of rushing and running inside the house, and to the shrieks and shouts.

Finally we shouted, "Nine and ten!"

But before we could again set foot inside the hall, my mother came out pulling a vehemently protesting Aunt Sheila.

"Please, Vinod," they pleaded, "just spare our faces, please." Then covering their heads with their sari pallu, they ran past us into the garden.

We ran after them, throwing balloons and shooting our water pistols at them.

"Rub the dyes, Uncle," we goaded.

"What! Dyes?" asked my mother, alarmed.

"Permanent textile dyes!" we shouted. "Ones which would never fade."

"Vinod, you wouldn't dare!" mother protested.

And my aunt shrieked, "No! Vinod, no!"

But Uncle did dare. He jumped at them, armed with all sorts of colours. He chased the shrieking ladies around the garden chairs, the sun umbrella, the bougainvillea and the hollyhocks, shouting, "Here come the permanent colours. Shocking pink, Trembling red, Shaking green. All shades are available."

And when he got to them, he smeared their cheeks and arms with the colour mixtures.

"No, Vinod, please!" pleaded mother. "How can I ever go for shopping, looking like this?"

And my aunt, who was to be married in a month's time, wept, "My face! My beautiful skin is ruined. No more marriage for me. Who will marry a woman with green cheeks?"

They flopped into the garden chairs rubbing their faces with their sari. But that made it even worse.

"Oh, Vinod, you rascal," they cried. "how will we clean it?"

"Well," answered Uncle coolly, "first try soap powder and a tin brush."

"Tin brush, did you say?" mother seemed to have been horrified. "Vinod, are you kidding?"

"Well," continued Uncle undisturbed, "if that doesn't help, try turpentine."

"Turpentine?" shouted my aunt. "On the face? Oh god, oh god, we're ruined!"

"But," replied Uncle gravely, "if that also has no effect, try hydrochloric acid."

"Acid?" cried both mother and aunt in unison.

Geeta had, by then, moved near mother. "Don't worry, mummy," she whispered, "I'll give you my magic soap. It will wash off everything." And she pressed a tiny pink soap into mother's palm.

She looked up. "Oh, Geeta, my little darling," she said and hugged her gently. "I wish it were true. A magic soap!"

"But it is, it is!" insisted Geeta. "It's Uncle Vinod who brought it."

Mother looked at the soap and then at Uncle who laughed at her mischievously. Then he pulled out a couple of soaps from his pocket and cried, "The magic soap! The only answer to permanent dyes!" And he threw them high up in the air. We ran to collect and distribute them to everyone.

The first one to rush into the bathroom was Aunt Sheila. When she came out, she cried joyfully, "It's coming off, Geeta, it's coming off beautifully. And how wonderful it smells."

Uncle Vinod laughed. We all laughed and clapped our hands. "It's a magic soap," we chanted, and another sighed, feeling much relieved. Then, with her usual charming smile, she turned to Uncle, "Well, Vinod, you certainly know how to enjoy Holi. Come inside, now you must partake of my Holi sweets."

*Sigrun Srivastava*







## A TRUE STORY

Lampo liked travelling. He knew the train schedules and could distinguish the passenger trains from the mail and express trains. He would catch a train and travel to some place or the other every day. But he always made sure to catch, from these places, an appropriate train, to take him back to Campiglia Marittima before the next sunrise. Would you believe that he thus made nearly 3,000 trips in his lifetime?

Once he reached Rome. The station master of Rome railway station sent a telegram to Lampo's master inquiring whether he

# LAMPO THE RAILROAD ROVER

**A**T the main railway station of Campiglia Marittima, in Italy, stands a gleaming memorial to a dog called Lampo. He had endeared himself to every man who worked with the Italian Railways. The statue shows Lampo seated on a pedestal, holding his right paw up. It faces the railway lines, and from that position it can watch the trains as they enter and leave the station.

Lampo was born in the U.S.A. and, in 1953, when he was still a puppy, he was taken to Italy by some American sailors. There he was adopted by the assistant station master of Campiglia Marittima.

could put the dog on a train that would take him back to Campiglia. The assistant station master said 'no,' because he wanted Lampo to find his own way back. And, much to the surprise of all, Lampo got down from the Rome-Turin Express which made a brief halt at Campiglia Marittima the next day!

After this no one could stop him. His fame spread all over the Italian Railways. Workers on duty at different railway stations would tie all kinds of ticket stubs to his collar, whenever they saw him on a train. Some workers even tied imitation tickets and passes to his tail, with the words

'Free pass for Lampo'. If anybody tried to remove them, the dog would give out a ferocious snarl.

Lampo, whose name in Italian means 'Flash of Lightning', visited, at least once if not more, practically every station in north-west Italy. He was very sociable and intelligent. He could pick out, on any train, a carriage where a railway worker might give him something to eat.

The dog used to escort the assistant station master's daughter to school every day. So, on school days, he made only short trips. The long tours he reserved for weekends and holidays!

Only once, in 8 years, did he fail to return by sunrise. Actually, he went past his stop. But he did manage to get back to Campiglia Marittima by taking a series of

connecting trains. According to railway employees, this could only have been done by someone who had followed the timetable.

Lampo's adventurous career came to a sad end on July 22, 1961. The hitchhiker died under the wheels of a goods train. The accident took place at Campiglia Marittima, and it happened after an illness that had kept him at home for some days.

Today, he stands sentinel over the train traffic. The assistant station master, who had adopted Lampo, wrote a booklet on him. There are some people who swear that the statue lets out a bark whenever a train arrives late. Is it that Lampo does not want trains to run late?

G.V. Joshi

## A Dacoit Turns A New Leaf

ONCE, there lived in a forest a very notorious dacoit called Shamsher Singh. People were extremely afraid of him. But he had one good quality. He loved children very much and never harmed them.

One day, a newcomer to his gang kidnapped a child from a nearby village. He did not then know that Shamsher would not like any harm come to children. So, he brought the child to their hideout and presented him to his chief. Shamsher got very angry with his gang member and ordered him to take back the child to the village and immediately restore him to his parents. The dacoit, then took the child to his village, but could not reach him to his parents as by that time the police had already arrived there to investigate the kidnapping. In short, the child remained with the dacoits.

Shamsher Singh adopted him and decided to bring him up as his own son. He named him Bahadur. As he grew up, Baha-

dur was taught, by Shamsher himself, the various tricks the gang employed in their nefarious activities. Bahadur thus grew up among dacoits.

When he was about sixteen years of age, Shamsher Singh, one day asked him to go to an adjoining town disguised as an old man. Once there, he was told, he should try to gain entry to a rich man's house and on some pretext stay there for the night. Shamsher also asked him to get hold of the keys to the safe the rich man kept in his house. "Be careful when you open it, but bring me all the money in it," he directed Bahadur.

Strictly following the plan, Bahadur reached the house of the rich man and knocked at his door. He opened the door and asked Bahadur, "Who are you, and what do you want?"

Bahadur, in order to gain an entry into the house, began to shiver. When he saw him thus, the rich man took pity on him, and invited him to stay there and rest for

the night. Bahadur agreed immediately. He was given food, and later a comfortable bed to lie down. After seeing to his comfort, the rich man went away to sleep. He was happy that he was able to render some help to a needy person. Bahadur, on the other hand, was wondering how he would commit the theft he had been ordered to. He remained wide awake. This was the first time he was on a mission to burgle. The



very idea of taking away another person's money troubled him very much. He doubted whether his 'father' himself would have deprived such a good person of his wealth.

Torn between his father's orders and his own hesitation to harm a kind-hearted man, who had treated him well and had trusted him enough to allow him to stay in his house, Bahadur finally mustered courage and got up to carry out Shamsheer's plan. He

picked up the keys of the safe from under the pillow of the old man. He then silently went up to the safe. But somehow Bahadur could not bring himself even to touch it. His thoughts once again troubled him and the feeling that he should not harm a good person weighed against everything else. He replaced the keys under the pillow, and went back to his bed.

In the morning, after thanking the host for his kindness, Bahadur left the place. When he reached the dacoits' hideout, Shamsheer Singh asked him for the money. While Bahadur explained what had happened the previous night, he became very furious with his son for not committing the theft though he had all the opportunity. Bahadur then explained to him why he decided not to take away the rich man's money. He asked his father, "Why are you always after others' money? By depriving others of their wealth, you are unnecessarily harming people who have done no harm to you. One should try to earn by honest means and without harming others."

Shamsheer Singh, after listening to his son, realized for the first time what a purposeless life he had been leading, hurting and harming innocent people. After thinking for a long time, he said, "Bahadur, you have given me wisdom. You have shown me the right path. One must never harm anyone." He then got up and said, "I must now go."

"Where are you going, father?" asked Bahadur.

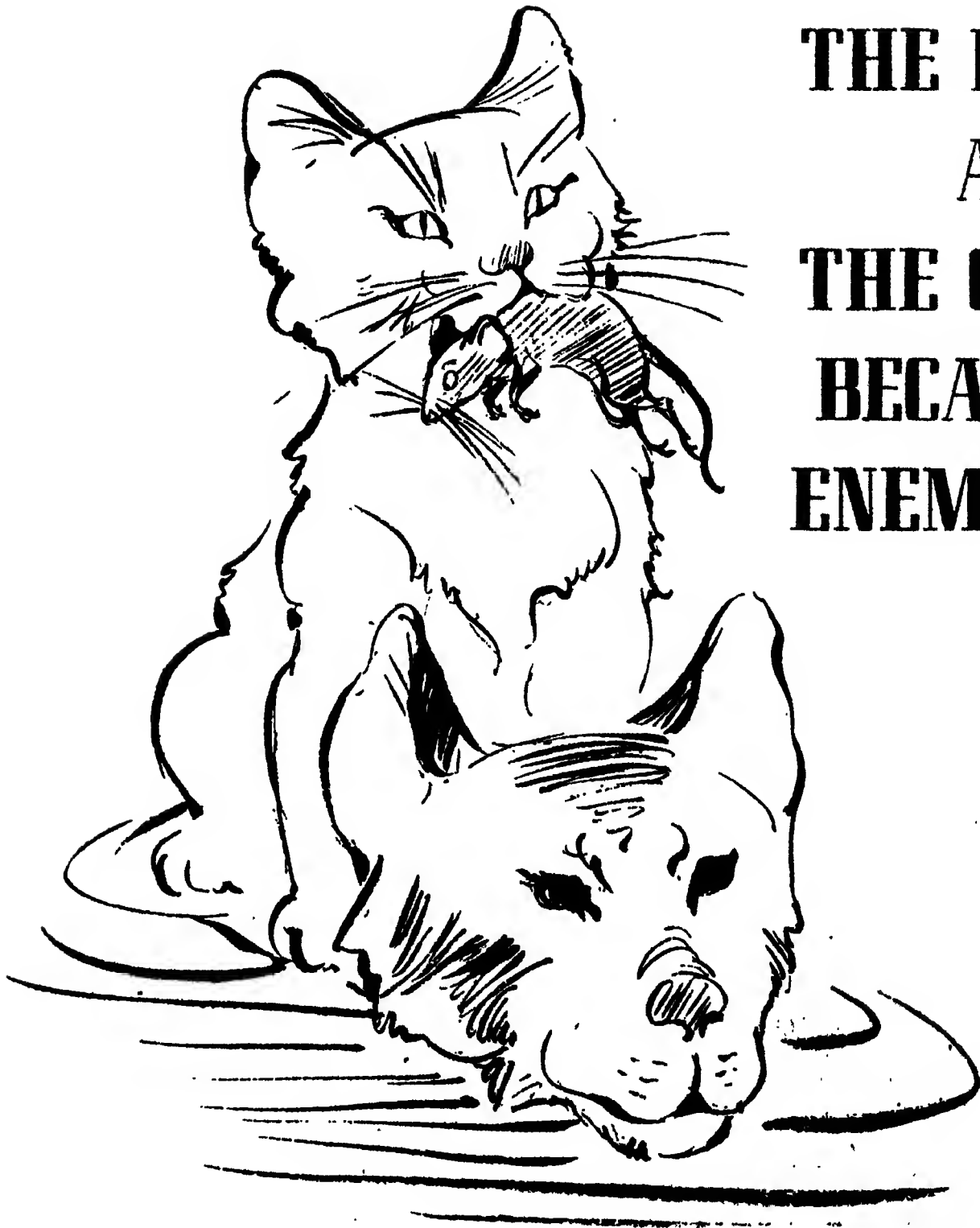
"To the police station," he said, calmly. "I must surrender and suffer punishment for my crimes."

But, before doing so, he took Bahadur back to his parents. They were overjoyed at seeing their son after so many years.

Shamsheer Singh the dacoit, to give you the rest of the story, was sent to prison. But the fact that he had given himself up to the police and that he had a record of exemplary behaviour in the jail, brought him a remission of sentence, and he was released after three years. He began a new life of honest and hard work. He had learnt the correct way of life from young Bahadur.

*Smita Nagpal (9)  
India*

# HOW THE DOG AND THE CAT BECAME ENEMIES



**T**HERE was once an old man and his wife who lived happily together. They had no children, but they kept a dog and a cat as pets. The old man worked and earned enough money to fetch them their meals. The dog and the cat never went hungry and grew very fond of their owners.

But times changed. The old man no longer had the same strength as before. He could not get work easily, and very often he and his wife and their two pets had to go without food. The woman sold whatever little jewellery she had, to buy foodgrains to last them for some days. Among them was a gold ring, which they did not know was a lucky ring. From the day they parted with the ring, their luck went from bad to worse.

At last, they called in a fortune-teller and asked him what the future had in store for them. He predicted that they would get back their luck if they could retrieve the gold ring.

Now it so happened that the dog and the cat overheard this conversation. They felt very sorry for their master, who was so good to them and who, they felt, did not deserve such a fate. They, therefore, decided to do something to help them regain their luck.

The dog came up with an idea. "We must get the ring back," he said.

"But the ring in its casket is with that old jeweller," the cat said.

"We'll solve that problem," the dog said calmly. "You catch a mouse, and make him gnaw at the casket and get the ring out. Tell him that you'll chew him to the last bone if he does not obey."

The cat agreed that it was a marvellous idea. She caught a mouse in no time, and with the mouse safe between her teeth, she and the dog started for the jeweller's house. On the way, they had to cross a river. The cat could not swim. So the dog carried her on his back and swam across the river.

They stealthily entered the jeweller's house. The mouse obeyed the cat for fear of being caten up. He gnawed at the casket and got the ring out. Only then was he set free. He scurried fast, lest the cat changed her mind and ate him up!

The dog and the cat started back for home, with the ring securely held between the cat's teeth. Once again, they crossed the river, with the dog carrying the cat on his back. They were both every excited, at the great service they were doing for their master.

There were a few houses on their way. But, now that the way had become quite familiar, the cat could jump over the walls and fences and climb the roofs, while the dog trudged along, having to go round each and every house. The cat did not wait for the dog to join her and, naturally, she was the first to reach home.

When she handed over the ring to her master, he was overjoyed. He turned to his wife and said, "What a faithful pet we have! See, she has gone and brought back our lucky ring. We must treat her like our own child and feed her well."

And later when the dog reached home, panting and breathless, he was beaten up and thrown out of the house for not having bothered to help as the cat did. She sat proudly by the fireside and did not care to tell their master that the whole idea was the dog's.

He was, naturally, very angry with the cat, as she had cunningly collected all the rewards for herself. Afterwards, whenever he met the cat outside, he would chase her away.

And since that day, it is said, the dog and the cat have been each other's enemy.

A.S.

# PANDORA

**H**AVE you heard of Pandora, whose over curiosity, it is said, has been the undoing of the human race?

The whole chain of events started with Prometheus playing a trick on Zeus, king of the Olympian Gods. This annoyed him so much that he decided to teach Prometheus a lesson by withholding fire from man.

But, Prometheus was not daunted by such a punishment. He provided fire to the mankind by lighting up a torch from the sun's fiery chariot. This only irked Zeus further. He took it as an insult to his divine dignity and high position. He, therefore, decided to avenge the indignity caused to him by Prometheus.



Zeus ordered Hephaestus to make a woman from clay. When this was done, he commanded the four winds, the North, South, East, and the West Wind, to breathe life into the clay woman. He then asked the goddesses to make her beautiful and adorn her body. Thus was created Pandora, a woman of great beauty and loveliness.

Zeus then directed Hermes to take her as his gift to Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus. But, Epimetheus had been forewarned by Prometheus not to accept anything from Zeus. So, he refused to marry Pandora.

Infuriated at the failure of his plans, Zeus got Prometheus chained to a rock. A vulture, finding him helpless and unable to save himself, began to tear at Prometheus's liver. All the wounds caused during the day would get healed in the bitter cold of the nights, but with the daybreak, the vulture would begin its attacks again. There was no respite to Prometheus from pain and the cold.

Epimetheus got terrified by the punishment given to his brother. He feared that a similar fate would befall him. So, he changed his mind and married Pandora.

Now, Epimetheus had been given a box by his brother, for safekeeping. Prometheus had put in it all the ills that afflict the mankind. Thus old age, sickness, insanity, and passion, all of them had been collected and sealed in the box. When Prometheus gave it to his brother, he had also warned him never to open it.

Epimetheus, in his turn, warned Pandora, too, not to open the box ever. She obeyed his instructions for some time. But then, she was a very inquisitive and foolish woman. She became extremely curious to find out what the box contained. She thought it might have some treasure inside.

Pandora, thus overcome by her desire to know the contents in the box, opened it. The evils confined in the jar then flew out immediately. They first stung Pandora herself and her husband. Then they flew out to spread their ill-effects all over the world.

Just because of a foolish and over curious Pandora, the mankind still continues to suffer from these evils.

*Geeta Chowdhry*

# THE HIDDEN TREASURE

**R**AJU lived with his mother in a small village at the outskirts of a very dense forest. His father, a woodcutter, had sometime back been killed by a man-eater. His mother, since then, was keeping bad health and had become too weak for any hard work.

On the days she felt better, she would go to the forest, collect twigs and sell them in the nearby town to buy food for both of them. Raju had always wanted to chop wood as his father used to. But at seven years of age, he naturally had no strength for any strenuous job. However, he would accompany his mother to the forest and help her collect a good lot of twigs.

One day, he told his mother, "Everyone in the village says that a big treasure is hidden in the forest. Let's go and search for it. If we get it, we will become rich, and you won't have to work."

But, his mother only laughed and warned him not to go deep into the jungle. "Raju, I too have been hearing about it since my childhood. It's all idle gossip; forget about it," she advised him.

Days passed. One day, his mother was feeling very weak. She asked Raju to go to the jungle and bring some twigs. 'Oh, this is a chance I cannot let go,' Raju thought while trotting along to the forest. He was determined to search out the treasure and present it to his mother.

So Raju went deep into the jungle. He began to tap tree trunks, and plod the ground.

Suddenly, he came to a clearance where



he found an old man seated on a tiger skin. He seemed to be meditating. Raju guessed that the man was a 'sadhu'. His face was covered with holy ash and there was a crooked stick lying by his side.

But, he could also be a dacoit disguised as a sadhu, thought Raju. He had heard stories about dacoit gangs coming to his village dressed in saffron robes. There could be no telling! Raju moved up cautiously.

"What do you want?" asked the old man.

"I have come in search of the hidden treasure," said Raju.

"Hidden treasure? If you get it, what would you do with it?" asked the old man.



"I'd give it to my mother," said Raju. "She is very poor. I have no father, and would like to take care of my mother."

"You're a good boy," said the old man. "It's the duty of children to look after their parents. But your mother already has a treasure!"

"That cannot be," Raju was perplexed. "If my mother had any treasure, she would have told me."

The old man smiled and told Raju to hurry back home and ask his mother. "Your mother must be worried; it's getting dark."

When Raju reached home, he found his mother very worried. She was standing outside the hut. When she saw Raju, she came running towards him. "Where have you been?" she asked. "I was afraid animals might have attacked you."

Raju did not answer. He was very angry with his mother.

"What happened, Raju? You haven't brought home a single twig? Are you all right?" she inquired anxiously.

"I'm angry with you, mother," replied Raju truthfully.

"Angry with me? But why, my son?"

"You've always taught me to speak the truth," said Raju. "You've also said that we should not hide anything from each other."

"Of course, my son," said the old woman.

"I met a sadhu in the forest," said Raju. "He asked me what I wanted and I told him I was in search of the hidden treasure. He then asked me what I would do with it. I told him that I wanted to give it to you. But the sadhu said, 'Your mother already has a treasure.' Why didn't you tell me about it, mother?"

On hearing Raju's reply, his mother collected him in her arms. "My son, the sadhu was right. I have a treasure."

"Then, where is it?" asked Raju.

"You are my treasure, my son!" said his mother.

Raju suddenly understood what the sadhu had meant. He resolved to grow up to be as great a help to his mother as a treasure could be in relieving her from her miseries.

Kuntal Gomez

# WHO IS THE KING OF THE FOREST ?

ONE day, a hungry fox was wandering in the forest searching for quick food. He suddenly came face to face with a tiger who, too, was going about hungry. The tiger was pleased to have come upon an easy prey. He bared his fangs and snarled at the fox; but when he was about to pounce on him, the fox halted him by saying, "Wait a moment; you're quite wrong if you think that with your strength, you are the king of the beasts. In fact, your courage is no match to mine." The fox then suggested to the tiger, "Let's go to the nearest town. Once we are there, you keep behind me. If the people do not get frightened on seeing me, then you're welcome to eat me up."

The tiger thought that the fox was being stupid and talking nonsense. But he agreed knowing fully well that eventually only he

could win. They both took a highway that would lead them to the town. The fox walked in front and the tiger followed him right behind. As they approached the town, the people on the road saw the tiger from a distance, and they ran for their lives.

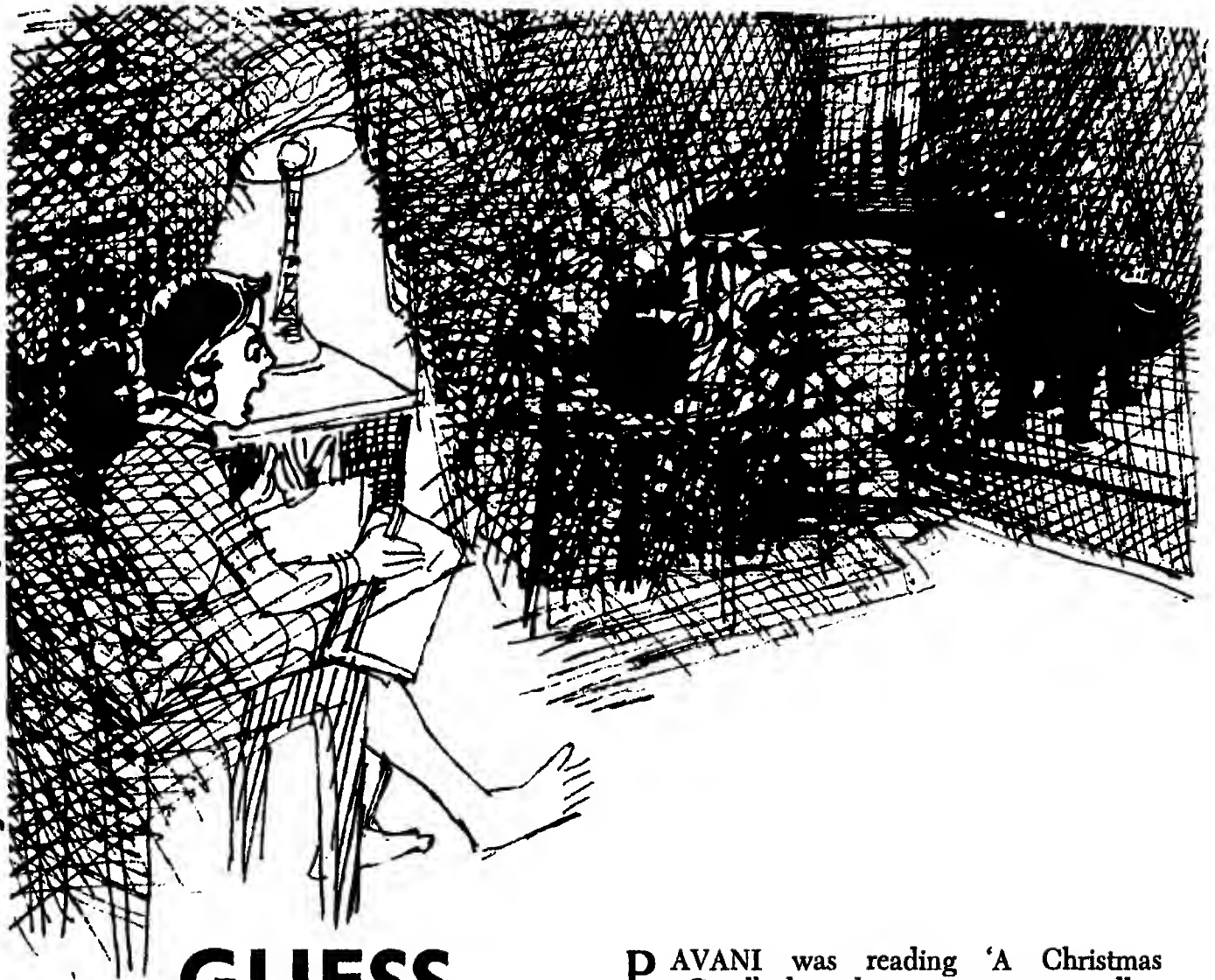
The fox turned round and asked the tiger, "Did you see that? I was walking in front of you. They saw me first, even before they could spot you, and they ran away in fear."

The tiger was very surprised. Is the fox so fearsome? he wondered. He tucked his tail between his legs and ran away.

The foolish tiger never realized that the fox had cleverly hid himself in the frightening appearance of the tiger by walking close in front of him!

PINKIE





# GUESS WHO CAME TO DINNER

**P**AVANI was reading 'A Christmas Carol' by that master story-teller, Charles Dickens. She was a voracious reader and would read anything from a book on dinosaurs to Donald Duck. Pavani lived in a big house in a secluded area which, if anything, became even more lonely at night. And so to keep herself awake on this cold February night, she had caught hold of the Dickens novel. Her father had been away in Bombay and was returning that night. Since her mother was resting with a severe headache, she had offered to wait up for him.

The Dickens in her hand, Pavani was getting fascinated by the ghosts that enliven the story. She was so much deep in the 19th century England that a knock at the door completely startled her. 'Father?' she wondered. 'Not so soon, and anyway I didn't hear a taxi or even footsteps!'

She was still deep in Victorian England, and so was hardly prepared for what she

saw at the door. A plump, friendly looking creature, about her own height, stood at the doorstep. It had a long thin neck and a small head perched on top, a fat middle, stout legs, the hind legs longer than the forelegs and a long heavy tail that tapered to a fat point. A snake? Yes, but for the fat body and legs. A kangaroo? Yes, but for that long neck that moved easily. . . . It couldn't be. . . . it couldn't be. . . . Why, it couldn't be anything but a brontosaurus! A very young brontosaurus, yes, but definitely a brontosaurus.

The brontosaurus was not shy. No. He just waddled in easily and looked around inquisitively. His eyes which rested on the flowers in the vase on the drawing room table lit up. Soon, he was happily eating the flowers and the leaves in the vase.

Pavani's mind, meanwhile, ran over everything she had ever read about the brontosaurus. It was purely vegetarian. It grew to be unbelievably large, much larger than an elephant. In order to be rid of its enemies, it generally escaped into water, where it could float. Yes, but there was a snag: the brontosaurus has been extinct for millions of years. In fact, it was already extinct when man had first appeared. So, then, how did this brontosaurus come to be?

Pavani came back from her thoughts to find the brontosaurus nibbling away at a cushion cover. "Bronto! Shoo! Shoo!" cried Pavani. He just gave her a puzzled look and dug deeper with his teeth. She tried to push Bronto away but that was like pushing two hundred kilos of weight. However, even as Pavani was wondering what to do, Bronto himself moved away. No doubt, the cushion was not as juicy as the flowers and leaves he had just eaten.

Bronto next attacked Pavani's mother's prized indoor display of moneyplant. She had tended it with loving care and it had grown into a long creeper, flowing out of its decorative container in the corner. Bronto moved towards it purposefully and began to polish it off. Pavani could only watch in despair. Her mother was fond of her house, her cushions, and her moneyplant. Tomorrow, she would be shocked at the havoc Bronto was creating and would not spare anyone, even if it is a brontosaurus.

Bronto looked pleased. Next, he shuffled inside. Pavani followed him helplessly. Bronto was heading towards the kitchen. No sooner had he entered it than he gave a distinct growl of pleasure. There was some spinach, washed and picked and left to dry in a colander. A minute later (which is very, very fast for a brontosaurus in a kitchen) Bronto was digging into the colander. He nearly ate up the colander, too, but then he decided that it wasn't a patch on the spinach. Pavani looked dubiously at the colander. It now had two gaping holes besides the tiny ones.

'Wonder what Mother can drain in it now?' she asked herself. 'Perhaps only pumpkins or melons!'

Bronto, meanwhile, was sniffing appreciatively. No doubt, he got mouth-watering smells in the kitchen. Of course! The gorgeous Rasdali bananas, which their neighbour had sent Pavani's mother, were not quite ripe yet, but Bronto wasn't the complaining kind. He began to eat them.

'My! He is eating up all of them!' thought Pavani in horror. 'And I love Rasdali myself!' She had to do something about it. She grabbed at the bunch and managed to salvage one, which she gobbled with indecent haste. Bronto felt hurt and showed it by flicking his heavy tail. It hit the kitchen shelf, rattling down tins and bottles.

"What is it, Pavani?" Mother called weakly from upstairs.

"Oh nothing!" Pavani shouted back quickly. After all, Mother is down with a bad headache and would not be in a fit condition to inspect messy kitchens.

"You'll have to go out now, Bronto," said Pavani. "You're too much trouble inside. But I don't think you can go away. You are a miracle, no less. And since a brontosaurus is hatched from an egg, there must be other eggs. That means you have brothers and sisters and, of course, a mother and father. You'll be the wonder of civilization—the first brontosaurus to be seen after millions of years—probably the first man has ever seen! And, so, you see, I shall keep you within my sight!"

Bronto gave her a smile—well, at least it looked like one, but he showed no inclination to leave the kitchen.

Pavani ran out and brought a guava from the guava tree in their garden. She hurried into the kitchen and showed the guava enticingly to Bronto. Bronto, who was at work on the potatoes and onions stored in the corner, sniffed rapturously. But he seemed to be one of those who insist on finishing what they have started. He ate up all the potatoes and each and every onion before he went after the proffered guava. It was easy enough to keep ahead of Bronto who was a slow moving fellow. At last pavani managed to bring him out, but not before he had



knocked down a tablelamp in the drawing room.

Pavani held her breath, waiting for her mother to come down. But she must have been too ill to hear anything or was fast asleep. Anyway there was no sign of her. Pavani sighed with relief and she led Bronto to the guava tree.

Now Pavani's father was as much proud of his garden as her mother was of her house. She knew he would be wild if even a single guava was missing, but there was no help for it.

'Anyway,' thought Pavani, 'a brontosaurus is a miracle. He is an honoured guest and we should treat him as one.' Though 'honoured guests' do not wreck their host's home, Bronto of course couldn't be expected to know such manners.

Bronto munched the guava merrily and then attacked the gooseberry tree. There were no berries as yet, but the foliage seem-

ed to satisfy him. And so while Bronto went through the garden in a right royal way, Pavani's heart sank deeper and deeper.

'Perhaps a film producer from Hollywood, or even Bombay will buy Bronto for a movie,' she thought hopefully. 'He can be the heroine's pet and made to sacrifice his life in saving hers. It will be a hit movie and the money they pay can make up for the losses today,' she mused, willing her spirits to rise.

Just then, two men came into the garden, shouting joyously, "There he is!"

"Who are you?" Pavani demanded.

"We own this creature. He escaped us," one of them replied.

"Oh, no, you don't own him. We do. He's practically eaten up everything in our house!" Pavani protested.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the other. "Don't we know his appetite! Still, he's ours. We saw him first!"

They advanced upon Bronto with a stout nylon rope and slipped a noose around his neck. Bronto obliged by stretching his neck for the noose and then went back to dine elegantly off the 'pudina' patch.

"There! Leave him alone!" shouted Pavani, valiantly holding on to the stout rope, while one of the men shook her hard.

Pavani woke up then, to find it was her mother who was shaking her.

"You've fallen asleep over your book!" Pavani's mother exclaimed. "You better go to bed. I'm all right now. I'll wait up for your father."

Pavani blinked groggily. She was amazed to find that her mother wasn't upset over the ruined cushion and the moneyplant and

the messy kitchen. And only then did it dawn on her that it had all been a dream!

"I had a wonderful dream," she told her mother. "Only it ended by frightening me out of my wits!" She then went on to tell her all about Bronto, while her mother smiled with amusement. "He was really cute, Mother," she said. "How I wish he had really come!"

But as she slipped inside her blanket a little later, she thought it was just as well Bronto had come only in the dream. Naturally, who would like to give up gorgeous guavas, luscious bananas, and heavenly gooseberries all the time?

*Subhadra Krishnamurthy*

## A PARENT TELLS

# The Other Side of the Story

AS I watch the children proudly walking up the steps and on to the stage to receive their prizes won in the Shankar's On-the-Spot Painting Competition held in the Modern School grounds, and as I hear the thunderous applause that follows each child walking off the stage with his or her beautifully wrapped prize, I can imagine the pride and joy of so many other parents like me whose children have already received a prize in the past or who, on this occasion, are preening their necks to spot their child waiting to have his or her name called out.

My son Ajay participated in this year's Competition and won a prize. And I remember how excitedly we all shared the planning and the anxiety that preceded the great day.

It was an event not just for Ajay to take seriously, but we as his parents got carried away and kept guiding and instructing Ajay in a manner as though he was appearing for his IAS examination! We always

knew that Ajay was a good artist and he was very imaginative and original in his work. There is no other organization in India or, I am sure anywhere else in the world, that encourages child artists to such an extent. And for Ajay to participate in it was naturally very important for all of us.

We took it all too seriously. My wife could not sleep properly the previous night and awoke much before the alarm rang. My parents were also restless and saw to it that we left the house much before the scheduled hour of the Competition. Ajay was very calm and composed, but we felt that it was only a sign of nervousness. We kept asking him whether he had not left any art material behind. He assured us he hadn't.

My wife had packed for him a flask with some fresh lime juice and a box of sandwiches in case he felt tired and hot. They were to be given three hours in which to draw, and he might get fed up and quit before he had produced his best. They were



also permitted to give upto six entries. So, we had foreseen all these problems and gone well-prepared.

The grounds of the Modern School were streaming with children. It seemed there were more than ten thousand of them and every parent who was present there had a jolt on seeing the upsurge for fear that their child was surely going to be the one to get lost in this melee.

The cheering and applause in the auditorium grew louder as the chief guest addressed the children especially and the parents, too. The convenor of the solemn and joyous ceremony arose to give a vote of thanks to the chief guest and to Mr. Shankar, who waved it off with a gesture of his hand. She thanked us parents for taking a keen interest in our children and looked forward to seeing more and more children participating in the colourful ocean of fun. But not before she had given us a ticking off regarding us as more of a nuisance than any help to our children did she wind up her little speech. She pleaded with us that our children are very capable of looking after themselves, and once having entered the enclosures with their equipment, they needed no help or guidance in their work. And how right she is!

The scene of the Competition flashes back to my mind—happy children sprawled out on the ground—unaware of the heat, the paint on their faces and clothes, the other children watching their work, the blaring announcements—lost in their own imagination which they reproduced on paper.

On the other hand, the chaotic scene at the three gates—the parents screeching out names of their kids, pleading with the volunteers to let them go in or at least take a message to their 'son who is sitting in such and such age group, wearing a red shirt and black shorts,' some coming to blows with the organizers showing vague cards, or finding a common friend and getting inside on the sly. Before half the time is up, you find them edging nearer to where their children are sitting and giving unasked for advice!

Ajay was quite firm with us when our nagging got on his nerves. I had got the cue, and I drew my wife to the eating stalls

## DAYBREAK

Thank the God for the early morning,  
For the new unknown day just dawning,  
A glorious interval in the cycle of nature,  
Leaving a person speechless  
with admiration and wonder.

The moon seems to hide behind the feathery  
clouds,

As if in awe of the mighty Surya  
That appears silently and slowly in the horizon,  
With a golden noble brow of red revelation.

The branches sway together nearer and nearer  
to say,

Making a swishing sound of "Good day".  
In friendliness and love of fellowship  
Leaving the world a better place to dwell in.

A flock of black birds trailing in the sky,  
Make a twittering sound of ecstatic joy,  
The sparrow, the nightingale and the lark are  
all up early,  
Filling the atmosphere with sweet melody.

Tiny droplets of dew on the grass,  
Also seem to be coating the tender plants.  
Giving them their much needed moisture.  
Encouraging them silently to grow faster.

O God! Bless us! Bless us on this wonderful  
day,

A day filled with deeds that will mark us or  
mar us,

Grant us the light that will show us the path.  
To thy wisdom, thy kindness and thy sweet  
gentleness.

*Vinita Raslogi (14)*  
*India*

and, as we ate and drank, we enjoyed watching the scene in front of us.

The convenor of the function waited till the laughter in the hall subsided and then continued her speech. Her vivid description of the parents at the venue of the Competition did seem foolish now and I, as a proud parent of a proud prizewinner, say, kudos to her!

*Alaka Shankar*

*(See picture feature on facing page)*



# a folio of child art

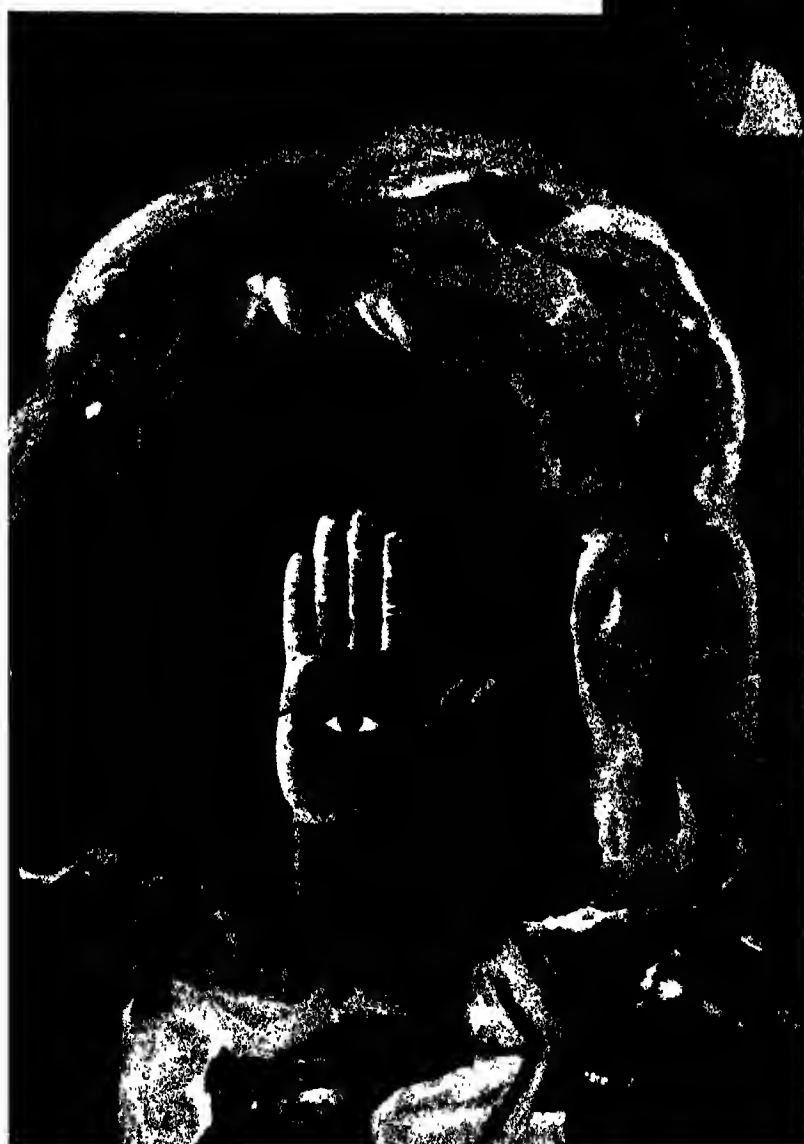
*(from Shankar's  
On-the-Spot Painting  
Competition 1978)*



Where are my colours ?



"Fortuna-telling" by Mandira Chatterjee  
Bagum Zaidi Memorial Prize



A maiden attempt ?

"Fortune-telling" by Rattan Kumer  
Children's Book Trust Award



A view of the parents, a view for the parents



Admirers aplenty



Calling missing parents

"Milk Booth" by Sankha Samanta

Children's World Award

The end of a long day



gerland for the chief guest



Minister Advani at the mike



Welcome by Chandna Sikund



prize here...



A pet there...



...and a shakehand

At the galleries



Photographs  
by our Staff  
Photographer

# KAPISH



● ANANT PAI  
● MOHANDAS

SIGAL THE JACKAL, IS THE TERROR OF THE RABBIT POPULATION OF THE JUNGLE. ONE DAY AS TWO RABBITS ARE PLAYING —

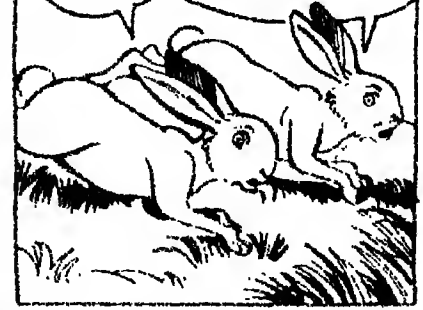
SIGAL IS COMING!

RUN!

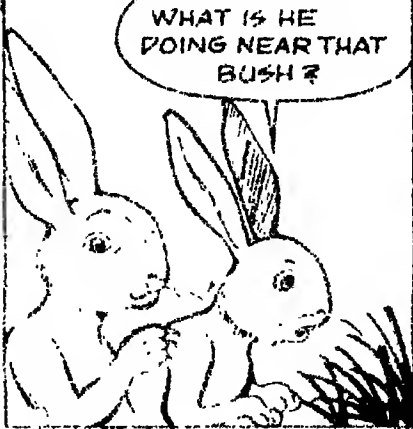


DID HE SEE US?

I DON'T THINK SO OR HE WOULD HAVE COME AFTER US



WHAT IS HE DOING NEAR THAT BUSH?



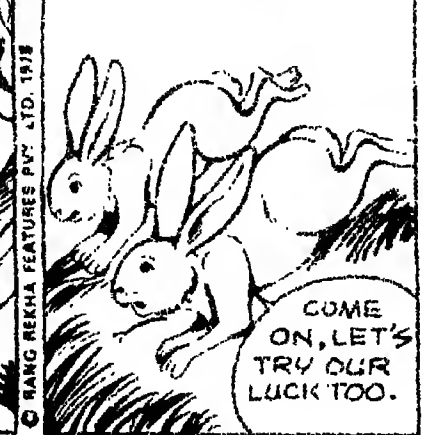
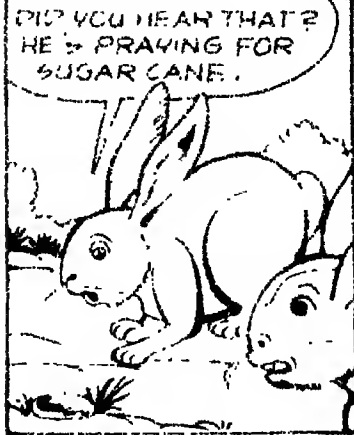
HE SEEMS TO BE PRAYING.



O, LORD OF THE BUSH, I'M HUNGRY GIVE ME TWO STICKS OF SUGAR CANE.



DID YOU HEAR THAT? HE'S PRAYING FOR SUGAR CANE.



COME ON, LET'S TRY OUR LUCK TOO.

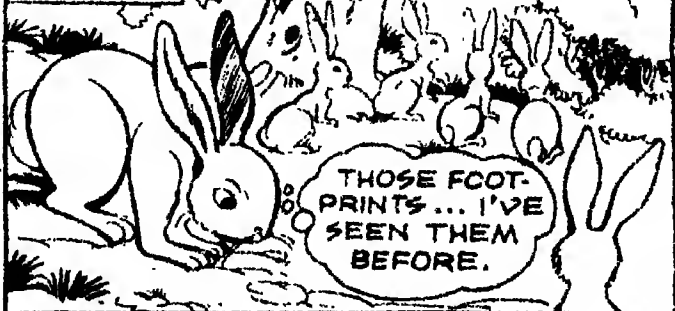
THE RABBITS ASK FOR CARROTS AND IMMEDIATELY TWO CARROTS POP OUT OF THE BUSH.



CARROTS! LET'S GO HOME AND TELL THE OTHERS.

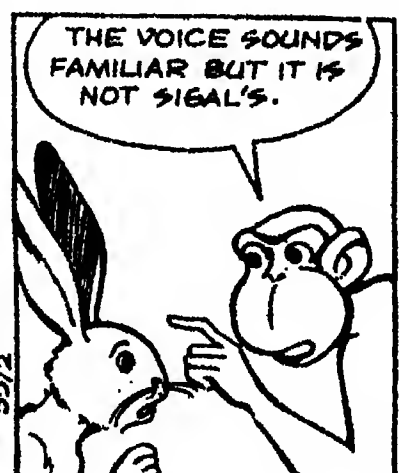
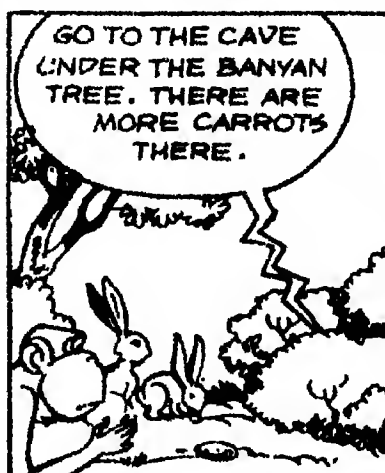
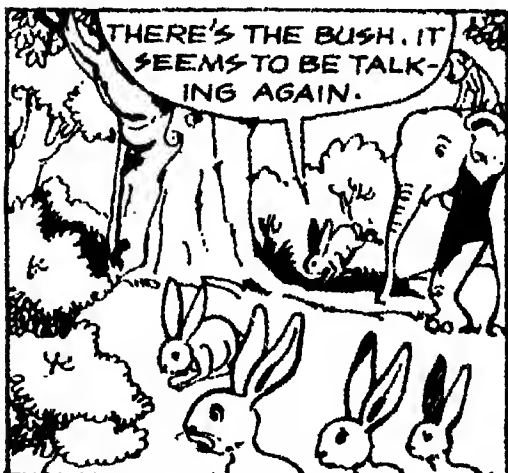
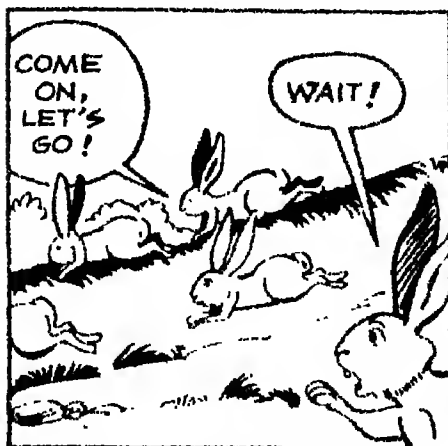
LOOK!

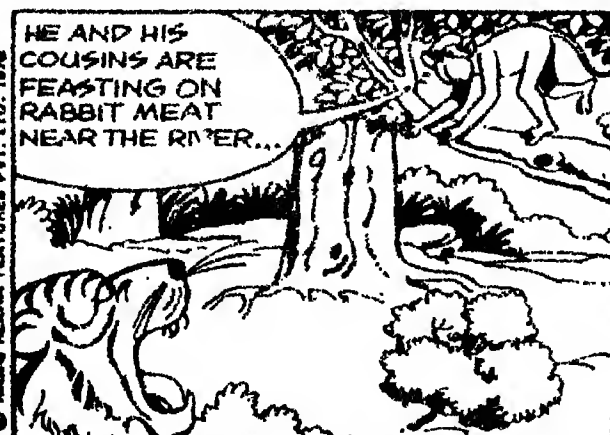
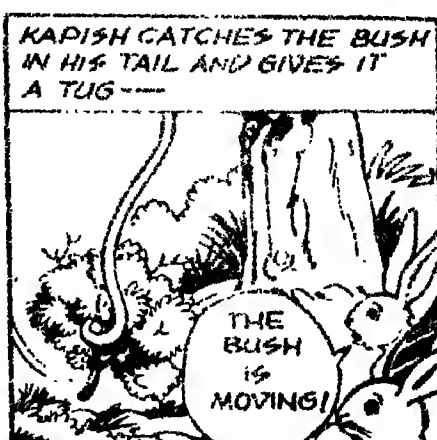
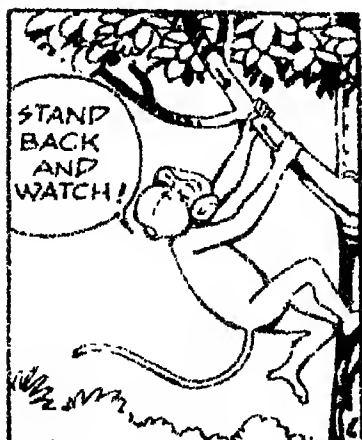
THE NEWS TRAVELS FAST. BY AFTER-NOON, DOZENS OF RABBITS ARE ASSEMBLED BEFORE THE BUSH. EVERYBODY IS IN A FESTIVE MOOD EXCEPT KHARNI.



THOSE FOOT-PRINTS... I'VE SEEN THEM BEFORE.









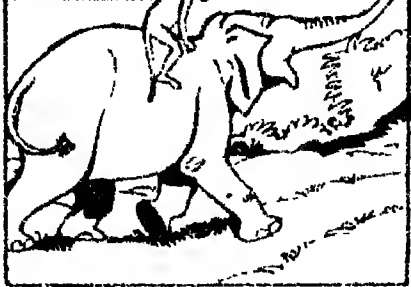
AND SO, WHILE PEELU RUSHES OFF TOWARDS THE RIVER...



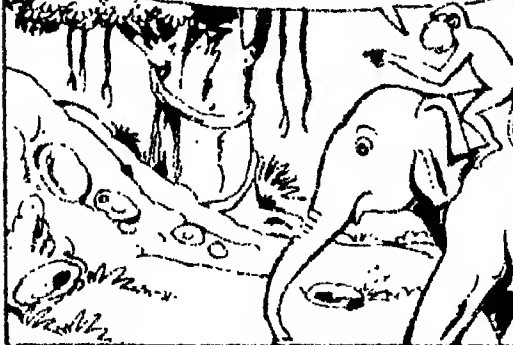
...AND SIGAL SITS PATIENTLY NEAR THE SECOND CAVE WAITING FOR ANOTHER BATCH OF RABBITS TO SHOW UP...



...KAPISH AND BUNDILA RUSH TO THE FIRST CAVE TO RESCUE THE RABBITS TRAPPED THERE -



THERE'S THE CAVE. SIGAL HAS CLOSED THE ENTRANCE WITH A STONE.



BUNDILA PUSHES AWAY THE BOULDER -



IT'S DARK IN THERE. BUT I HEAR SOMEONE COMING.



HALF A DOZEN RABBITS COME RUSHING OUT -

WE WERE TRICKED!

NO CARROTS HERE.

SIGAL WAS WAITING FOR US.



WE KNOW THE WHOLE STORY. HERE COMES KHARNI, GO HOME WITH HER.



KAPISH AND BUNDILA THEN RUSH BACK TO THE BUSH. THEY FIND A LARGE SACK OF CARROTS IN THE DITCH.

OUR RABBIT FRIENDS WILL BE GLAD TO HAVE THIS.



THAT EVENING WHILE THE RABBITS FEAST ON JUICY CARROTS...



... TWO FORMER FRIENDS ARE HAVING A BITTER QUARREL  
YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT THE FIRST CAVE. YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE TO THE RIVER.



THANKS TO KAPISH, AN EVIL PARTNERSHIP IS ABOUT TO BREAK UP.

THE END

## The Expanding and Diminishing Cards

I CAME in personal touch with the Grand Old Man of Magic, Roy the Mystic (in private life Jatindra Nath Roy), in 1961 when he came down to Calcutta from Darjeeling where he had been staying after retirement from professional magic.

"When you first saw my show in 1926, I was a young magician of 35. Now I am a retired old man of seventy," he said. "Ah, how time flies!" (See *Children's World*, April 1978).

I took the great magician to the offices of a magazine in which I had started a series on magic. He was received with great enthusiasm. He was the last of the giants of the old school of Magic, who depended more on personal skill than on mechanical aids. The old master had agreed to come on the clear understanding that he would not be requested to perform, as he felt unsure of himself, being physically feeble and long out of practice. But the members of the staff were newspapermen, after all, and they earnestly entreated the old master to oblige them with at least one demonstration. They quoted the Bengali proverb: "Mawra haati lakh taaka." (An elephant is worth a lakh rupees even when dead.)

I was not very happy about this request because I did not want my hero to be humiliated by failure. But they all, including the highly respected editor, insisted and Roy the Mystic agreed to yield. "Bring me a pack of cards," he said, and a pack of cards was produced. With that borrowed pack, the old master perfectly mystified us all with three classic items of card magic: Cards up the Sleeve, Thirty Cards trick, and the Expanding and Diminishing cards. It was unbelievable that the aged hands could still perform the extremely difficult sleights with such perfectly undetectable mastery. Everybody felt that "an elephant is worth a lakh of rupees even *old*." His magic performance looked like sheer witchcraft in broad daylight.

The trick of the Expanding and Diminishing Cards, as Roy the Mystic explained to me later, was invented by the great French magician (who might well be called 'Jadu-Samrat') Robert Houdin, and explained by Houdin himself in his book on

Magic. Roy the Mystic minutely followed Houdin's routine, invariably with excellent results. The whole trick depends on creating optical illusion. The secret is so simple that it is hard to believe that it will work. But it works, as was proved beyond doubt by Roy the Mystic's performance.

Houdin's method of performing the trick, as Roy the Mystic later explained and demonstrated to me at home, is as follows: Taking the pack of cards, which is just ordinary, you pretend to examine the cards minutely and say, "I see these cards contain some quantity of rubber which makes them elastic, so that their size can be increased or diminished by pulling or pressing them in a particular manner." This is, of course, all bunkum, but you utter the statement with all show of seriousness and it acts like a hypnotic suggestion on some susceptible minds.

Instead of taking the whole pack, which will be difficult to handle, you take only a part of the pack and open it fanwise in the left hand, back of the hand facing your audience.

"The cards, you see, are of the ordinary, usual size," you say. "If you wish to make them larger (at this point, with your right hand you close the pack as you would close a fan), you just have to pull them a little, in this manner."

With your right hand you pull the closed pack (i.e., part of the pack held in your left hand) lengthwise upwards and spread the cards fanwise again. The cards will now be projected more than before beyond the fingers of your left hand and will, therefore, look much larger. (See illustration No. 1)

"See the advantage of rubberized cards?" you say. "You can enlarge them by pulling, as I have done just now. Now, if you wish to make them smaller, you just tap a little like this, and the thing is done." (Here you close the fan again and give a little pat with your right hand on the top of the pack, pushing the pack downward into the left hand. After that you spread the cards

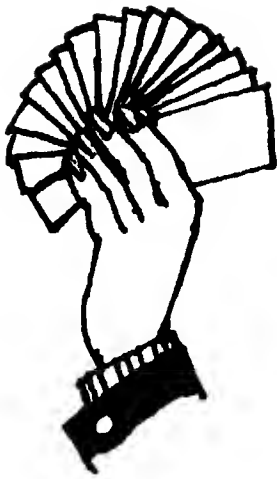


Illustration No. 1: The cards made to project as much as possible beyond the fingers, produce an optical illusion and seem to have become much larger. The suggestion that the cards contain rubber (and is, therefore, elastic) has a psychological effect and helps the optical illusion if the performer is clever enough in pretending to believe his own words that the cards have become bigger.



Illustration No. 2: Cards are fanned in such a way that spectators see only a small portion, the extreme ends, of the cards, the greater portion being hidden by the fingers. This produces an optical illusion and the cards seem to have shrunk into a very small size.



Illustration No. 3: 'Palming'—to palm a card (or cards) in the right hand away from the left hand, grip the card between the extramitties of the four fingers and the ball of the thumb (the bottom part of the palm). The performer helps the fixing of the card in the right palm by pressing it into the right palm with the left hand middle finger.

into a fan again, holding them a little more hidden by the fingers of the left hand. The cards will now look smaller, as if the rubberized, elastic cards have become smaller in size with the pressure.)

"They can be made smaller still," you say. Close the fan and push the pack farther down, so that more will remain hidden behind the fingers when the cards are spread fanwise again, and the cards

will seem to have become smaller. (See illustration No. 2)

At the last stage of Roy the Mystic's performance of this small but very effective trick (not so easy to perform *effectively*), he said, "In fact, these cards can be squeezed into such small size that they become practically invisible." In the process of giving the cards the final squeeze with the right hand, Roy the Mystic really took the cards away, concealed in his right hand, clinging to the palm. This, in magical parlance, is called "palming". (See illustration No. 3) At the same time, he closed the left hand into a fist, giving the impression to his audience that the closed fist contained the diminished cards. Keeping the eyes of the audience focussed on the left fist, it was easy for him to get rid of the cards concealed in the palm of his right hand and open out the left hand to show that the cards had become really invisible.

"This trick, devised by the great Robert Houdin," said Roy the Mystic to me, "is different from the Diminishing Cards trick which cannot be performed with a borrowed pack. It requires cards of different sizes specially made for the trick. I have always preferred Houdin's method, because it is so effective anywhere, anytime, with any pack of cards."

A few days after this, I had the good fortune of witnessing a *madari* (roving magician) performing on the roadside. Roy the Mystic was with me at that time. The *madari* was a middle-aged man and his assistant was a boy about 10 years. There was an eager crowd surrounding the illiterate magician demonstrating the feat which western magicians call "Second Sight". The boy assistant lay on the ground completely covered by a sheet of cloth so that he could not possibly see anything. The *madari* was moving from one spectator to another, requesting each to hand over to him any small thing he liked, to be described in detail by the boy. One after another different objects were handed over to him — pencil, safety-pin, notebook, cash memo, and what not. The *madari* was asking the boy, and the boy was describing the objects one after another with wonderful accuracy, although everything was out of his sight. The spectators were all mystified by the boy's uncanny power. Did the boy possess a sixth sense? they wondered. Besides, the boy's replies to the *madari*'s ques-

tions were very often extremely witty and funny. The experiment was, therefore, both wondrous and funny and the team of two quite artistic, though rustic, illiterate and shabbily dressed in rags.

I recalled that long ago, in 1926, in Dacca (now in Bangladesh), I had seen Roy the Mystic present this item in his magic programme with his Nepali boy assistant dressed as a girl. Now Roy the Mystic, too, was fascinated by this show, recollecting his own professional days. In appreciation, he praised the madari and his brilliant boy and paid them two rupees. The collection plate of the madari had till then remained nearly empty, for the crowd was enjoying the show without paying the showman anything. Now many felt ashamed and dropped coins of small and middling denominations on the madari's plate.

I knew the madari must be using some code to convey information on the various objects to the unseeing boy under the cloth cover. But I could not understand what kind of code he was

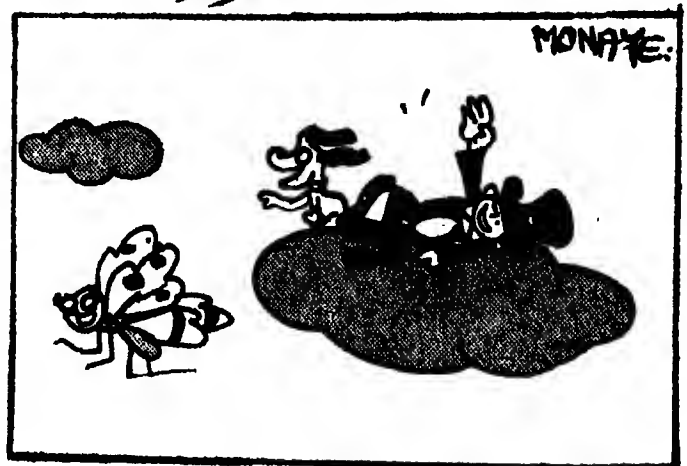
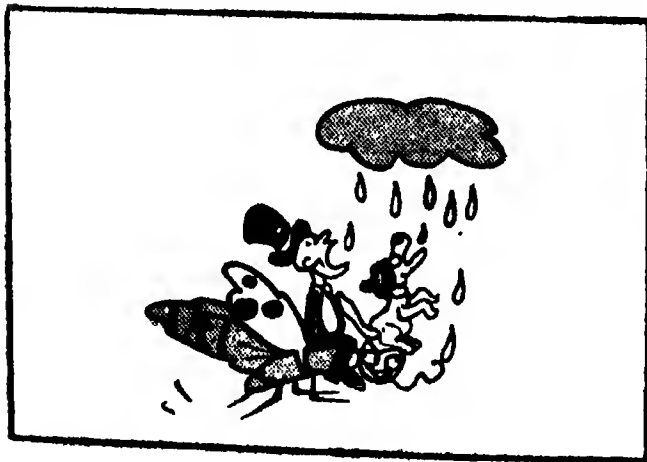
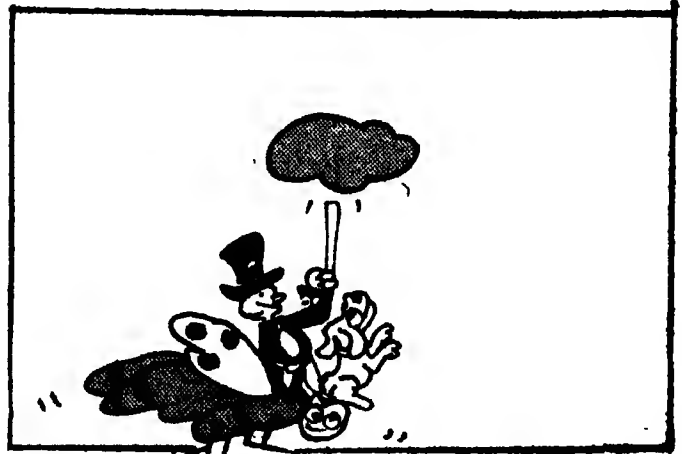
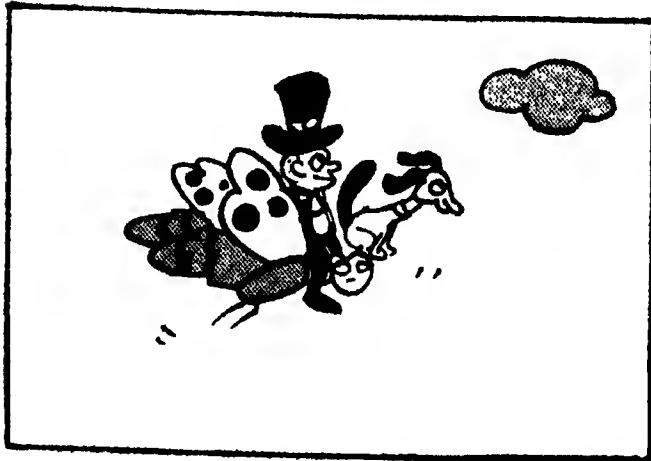
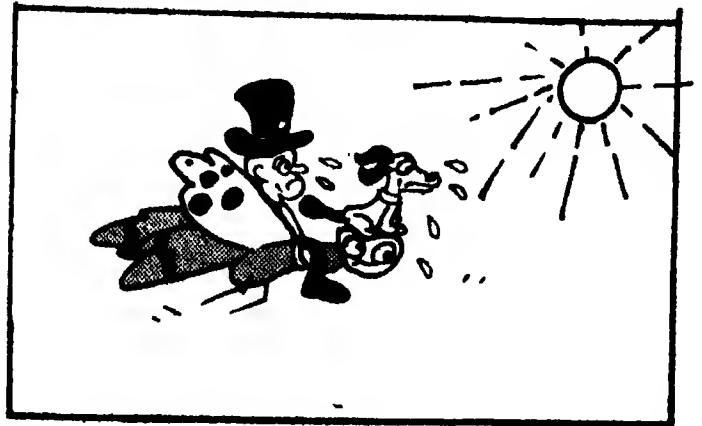
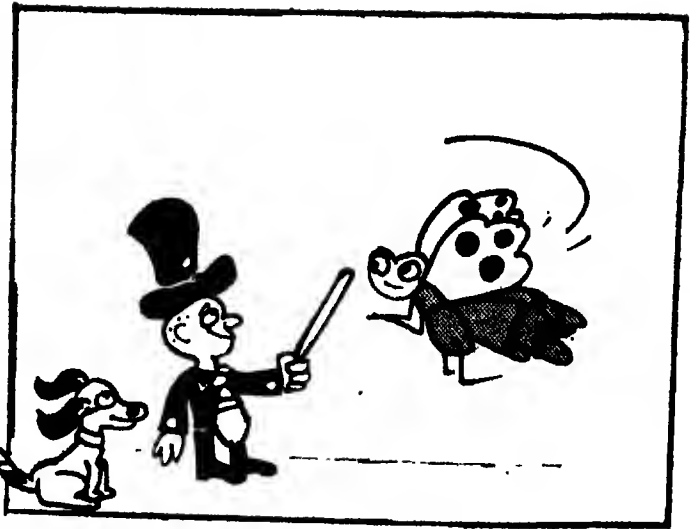
using. In the kind of code usually adopted in this trick, the blindfolded assistant knows the object from the question put to him or her. For instance, "What is this?" may mean notebook. "Can you tell me what it is?" may mean a pencil. "Tell me what I have in hand" may mean a watch, and so on. But we found, after carefully marking for some time, that the madari was often using the same question for different objects. It seemed he was using some different kind of code which was outwitting those acquainted with the usual kind of spoken code.

Roy the Mystic felt sorry that the poor madari and his boy assistant, who could present such a fine "second sight" act along with a number of beautiful feats of sleight-of-hand magic could not earn even a moderately decent livelihood, while performers in the U.S.A. and Europe *presenting only this item* (Second Sight) and nothing else on the stage earned huge amounts and amassed great wealth.

*Ajit Krishna Basu*



*(Turn over)*



MONAIE.

# The Uncommon Pet

"THANK goodness, it's settled at last!" said Grandma, heaving a huge sigh of relief.

"What is it, Grandma? What has been settled?" asked Ina curiously.

I looked up from the knitting I had been wrestling with for the last hour-and-a-half and looked at Grandma, too. She was looking profoundly satisfied and that was a sure indication of exciting news!

"What has been settled, Grandma?" Ina asked again.

"Your Aunt Annapurna's wedding!" said

Grandma with the air of making a regal announcement.

"Hurrah!" I cried jumping up. "Oh goody-goody!"

"And is he a singer like Saigal?" asked Ina in a hushed voice. Our Aunt Annapurna, you may remember, had vowed to spend a life time dedicated to music and, if she had to marry at all, had determined to marry only a singer.

"Of course, not," said Grandma. "He is a doctor and doctors, successful ones that is, haven't the time to moon about, singing songs!"



"Oh!" I said looking bewildered. "How disappointing for poor Aunt Annoo! Now that she's joined the Music School. . . . ."

"Annapurna left the Music school months ago," said Grandma. "It was sheer nonsense, in any case!"

"When is the wedding to be?" asked Ina. "And are we going to Calcutta like the last time?"

"No. They're all coming here," said Grandma looking pleased. "The date hasn't been fixed as yet. There are a lot of things to see to, before that. Your Aunt Annapurna's father has not yet met the boy's father. They've merely been corresponding. But the boy's parents are coming here next week. So are Annapurna and her parents. They can all meet here."

"How jolly!" I cried.

"Very clever of you to arrange it so neatly," said Ina. "Now we can share in the fun without having to miss school."

"I had to consider you, girls," said Grandma. "And, moreover, I'm getting old, too. I can't flit about from one place to another as easily as I managed before. Nor can Grandpa. And as for Teddy. . . ."

"No more trips to Calcutta for him!" said Ina and I together. "Not after last time!"

"I should think not!" said Grandma.

Aunt Annapurna and her parents were expected the very next week. Grand Uncle Ray, Aunt Annapurna's father, was Grandma's only brother and he depended on her for all major decisions. We loved Aunt Annoo, who was quiet and gentle and Teddy loved her, too. The prospect of Aunt Annoo's wedding was all the more exciting because Mummy had promised to buy us red saris for the occasion. And weddings are always fun!

Both Grandpa and Grandma were more excited than I'd ever seen them. Especially after Grand Uncle Ray turned up with Grand Aunt and Aunt Annoo, all smiles.

"Aren't you sorry that you're not marrying a singer?" asked Ina curiously. "And

what about your promise of being another Lata?"

"It was childish of me to think so," said Aunt Annoo with a smile. "I've given up these ideas now."

Grandma and Grand Aunt Ray spent most of their time arranging and rearranging the house and planning a hundred and one dishes. Or so it seemed to us.

"By the way, did I ever tell you that the boy's father is mad about animals?" said Grand Uncle Ray at tea-time.

"Mad about animals?" said Grandma taking off her specs and putting them on again. "What exactly do you mean?"

"You mean he is a hunter?" asked Grandpa looking interested. "Big game or birds?"

"Not exactly," said Grand Uncle Ray. "What I meant is he is terribly fond of animals. All kinds of animals, and he can't bear anyone ill-treating them. . . .or. . . .or. . ."

"Good heavens!" cried Grandma cutting him short.

"Does that mean that his house is full of animals?"

"I expect so," said Grand Uncle looking apologetic. "You see, the first thing he wanted to know about Annoo was whether she had a 'heart for animals,' whatever that means!"

"They say that a creature has only to stray into their house," said Grand Aunt, "and it is made welcome, for keeps!"

"Good heavens!" cried Grandma again. "Why doesn't he find a job at a zoo, in that case? Or become a vet?"

"At his age?" cried Grand Uncle looking amused.

"Do talk sense, Didi!"

"Well, why didn't he become one when he was young, then?" said Grandma accusingly, as if it was all Grand Uncle's fault. "Poor Annapurna! What a life!"

"I think all of you are forgetting one important point, and that is, it is the boy's



father who is so fond of animals and not the boy. Annapurna will live with him in Poona, and not with her in-laws, except during holidays," said Grandpa in one breath.

"Ah yes," said Grandma looking relieved. "And, in any case, I don't think they'll ask Annoo to feed the straying bulls or bathe the muddy buffaloes! It just isn't proper to ask a bride to do that!"

"I should hope not!" cried Grand Aunt in alarm. "My poor daughter! I only hope we're doing the right thing in considering this proposal!"

"Now don't you be a ninny, Parvati!" said Grandma in a sharp tone. "There's nothing dreadful about animals. Nothing much, anyway."

"Not about ordinary domestic ones like dogs, cats, parrots, and the like, but bulls and buffaloes. . . ."

"Now," said Grandpa interrupting her, "do you know for certain which animals he is partial to?"

"N..no," said Grand Uncle looking doubtful.

"Then there's no need to worry from beforehand," said Grandpa.

"Anyway one thing is certain," said Grandma with conviction. "And that is, Teddy must be locked up the day they decide to come!"

"Teddy locked up!" cried Ina in dismay. "Oh why, Grandma?"

"Surely, he won't mind Teddy if he is so fond of animals!" I added.

"That's not the point," said Grandma. "But he may have a few. . . .er. . . .animals with him when he does come. I'm not having a free-for-all here before we've had a chance of talking to him properly!"

"Ah, yes," said Grandpa ruefully, "the old boy had better be locked up, then! No point in ruining poor Annapurna's chances!"

"Don't be ridiculous," said Grandma. "Teddy can't do that!" But I do want some peace while the gentleman's around!"

"The gentleman", meaning Aunt Annoo's future father-in-law, sent word that he'd be around to see us the very next day. Grandma and Grand Aunt started a regular orgy of baking and frying and boiling, while Grandpa and Grand Uncle walked about the place, eyeing everything critically. Ina and I were told to stand by the gate and show him in.

"I expect he'll bring one of his dogs!" said Ina. "It will be interesting to see what he is like."

"Thank goodness, old Teddy is locked up in the attic," I said. "If he brings another alsatian, I can just picture what is going to happen!"

"If he likes unusual pets, he may bring a tame monkey or a tame bear with him!" Ina suggested.

"He may have them, but it's hardly likely that he'll bring them along to a strange place," I said doubtfully.

We were so busy talking that neither of us noticed an elderly gentleman opening the gate. He walked in briskly and trotting obediently at his heels was. . . .a. . .BILLY GOAT! A clumsy, shaggy billygoat with an untidy beard! "He's come!" hissed Ina. "And he's got a goat with him. How disappointing!"

"He can't care very much about animals!" I declared.

"This is the untidiest, dirtiest goat I've ever seen!"

"Come on, Tina!" said Ina. "Don't forget that we've to show him in! And the billygoat, too, I suppose, ugh!"

The old gentleman leaned and patted the goat so affectionately that I felt that he must indeed be fond of the creature. "Hello, my dears!" he said smiling at us broadly. "Lovely goat, isn't he?"

"Yes," we said obediently. "Very lovely!" Then we took him in, the goat leaping beside us.

"Welcome, welcome!" cried Grandpa ushering him in. "We're so happy to meet

you at last!" Then his eyes fell on the goat. "Remarkable creature!" he added.

"Lovely goat!" said Grand Uncle taking the cue from him. "I love goats!"

"Yes, he is a fair specimen!" agreed our aunt's future father-in-law, walking into the drawing-room.

Before anyone could do anything, the goat made a beeline for the centre table, pulling down Grandma's elaborately-crocheted table cloth. The porcelain flower vase, so dear to her, crashed down, breaking into a hundred little fragments. The goat thought nothing of it, however, and slumped into a corner of the room chewing the table cloth happily.

"Oh dear!" cried Grand Uncle looking

dismayed, but not quite knowing what to do. That vase had been his gift to Grandma years ago and he knew that she treasured it.

"Oh dear!" echoed Grandpa, feeling equally helpless. After all, it was hardly proper to chase out a pet belonging to one's visitor. And a V.I.P. visitor at that!

"Don't worry!" said the V.I.P. soothingly. "After all, animals will be animals."

"Yes," said Grandpa and Grand Uncle together, eyeing the goat murderously. The latter threw aside the half-chewn table cloth and began nibbling at a magazine, that was lying about.

"And it's only just arrived!" whispered



Ina. "Poor Grandpa hasn't even had a look at it!"

"Poor Aunt Annool" I whispered. "What a life!"

In the meantime, Grandma heard sounds from the kitchen and rushed into the room, rolling pin in hand. "What is happening here?" she cried. "Good heavens! What is that goat doing in my drawing room? WHO let it in?" Just then her eyes fell on the stranger and her manner changed abruptly. "What a dear little goat!" she said gulping down her wrath. "Never mind the vase and the table cloth! I was getting tired of them anyway!"

Ina and I gaped at her, our mouths wide open in astonishment. "Don't stand gaping there, Tina," said Grandma looking at me sternly. "Tell Bhola to come and mop up the place."

"Nice to see a family where everyone is so fond of and kind to animals!" said the gentleman. "Such understanding is rare, indeed."

"Yes," said Grandpa and Grand Uncle nodding miserably.

The goat, having the time of its life, attacked one article after another and threw everything helter-skelter. "If only Teddy were here!" said Ina. "I've a good mind to go and open the attic door. Ruining our things like this!" Possibly Grandpa and Grandma felt the same, but they kept quiet for Aunt Annool's sake.

But for his queer pet, the gentleman seemed to be a very nice person. He talked so interestingly that we could visibly see Grandpa warming up to him. Especially when he started talking about alsatians. "I've six of them at home!" he added.

"Six! By Jove!" said Grandpa. "We've got one and he is more than a handful! Always getting into scrapes!"

"An alsatian?" cried the gentleman eagerly. "Where is he?"

"Somewhere about" said Grandpa looking

vague. "I think Raghu, the gardener, has taken him for a walk!"

Nothing could be further than the truth, of course! At that moment, Teddy who had been valiantly struggling with the catch of the door, succeeded in getting the door open. 'Woof!' he cried joyfully, smelling the billy-goat at once. 'Woof! Woof!'

Before the astonished goat could move an eyelid, Teddy was upon him, grabbing his untidy beard. "Baa!" it bleated in panic. "Baa—baa!" Teddy chased it right out of the room.

"Shoo! Teddy!" cried Grandpa. "Leave the poor thing alone!"

"I wonder who opened the door!" cried Grandma. "I only hope Teddy won't hurt your poor goat! He'll frighten him, of course."

"My goat?" said our guest blinking. "My goat, did you say?"

"Of course," said Grandma.

"I don't get you," said the gentleman. "Surely, you don't mean this goat?"

"Of course, I do" said Grandma. "Isn't he yours?"

"Of course, not!" cried he. "I thought he was YOURS! That's why I didn't say anything all this time!"

For a whole minute there was pindrop silence in the room! Then everyone burst out laughing. HOW they laughed! "Oh dear!" cried Grandma mopping her eyes. "If this doesn't beat anything I ever heard of!"

We settled down to a hilarious tea, to which Teddy was also invited. "Do you have any other pets except the six alsatians?" I asked our guest.

"Yes, a cat and a parrot," he said with laughing eyes, "BUT no billy-goats, I assure you!"

Swapna Dutta

# FAMOUS MYSTERIES—4:



BY the middle of World War I, death and disaster in England had almost become everyday happenings. But, even then, people there were stunned and shocked when, at midday of June 6, 1916, the newspaperboys began shouting the loss at sea of Field Marshal Earl Kitchener of Khartoum, the Secretary for War.

But then, almost immediately, along with the condolence messages, rumours began to circulate that Kitchener, the hero of many campaigns, was not really dead! He was on board the "Hampshire", which was reported to have struck a German mine on the night of June 5.

The ship was bound for Archangel and Kitchener

was going on a top secret mission to Czarist Russia. He had been, for long, in correspondence with the Grand Duke Nicholas, who was the Commander-in-chief, till the Czar himself took over the command of the Russian army.

The Czar had invited Kitchener to visit the Russian war fronts and give advice. The Czar also wanted him to report back to the British Government on the problems of military cooperation and supplies between the two countries. Kitchener was more than keen to go, but he first consulted King George V and Prime Minister Asquith. It was only after he had obtained their consent that he undertook the journey.



KITCHENER, though idolised by the people, was not very popular in the Parliament. He rarely spoke in the House of Commons. But before his departure, he went to the Commons and replied to his critics in a memorable speech in the House. It was a great triumph for him.

On Saturday, June 3, he went to Broome Park, his country estate near Canterbury. His personal Military Secretary, Colonel Fitzgerald, accompanied him. Kitchener loved Broome Park and spent the Sunday morning working in his sunken rose garden, which had a fountain with nymphs and sea-monsters in the central grass square.

That night, after signing official papers at the War Office, he left by a night train for Thurso, in the far north of Scotland. The official party included Fitzgerald, other high-ranking military officers and civil servants, a diplomat from the Petrograd Embassy, a cipher clerk, three servants, and Kitchener's personal detective.

As a last official duty prior to their departure, Kitchener and his staff went on board the "Iron Duke", the flagship of Sir John Jellicoe, and inspected the ship before leaving at 4.15 p.m. to board the cruiser "Hampshire".

# LORD KITCHENER



**T**HE weather was foul, with the north-easterly gale steadily increasing, but Kitchener, an excellent sailor, would not hear of any delay, and the "Hampshire" set sail just before 5 p.m. She left the sheltered waters of Scapa Flow, in the Orkneys, and kept close to the western coast of the islands.

Before long, the "Hampshire" had to be partially battened down and around 7 p.m. the Captain detached the two escorting destroyers. It was at approximately 7.40 p.m., when the "Hampshire" was about a mile and a half off Marwick Head, that it hit one of the mines laid by a German submarine.

First leaning to the starboard, then going down by the head, the "Hampshire" sank quickly, within a quarter of an hour. Only about a dozen survivors succeeded in battling against mountainous waves to reach the wild, rugged coast with cliffs rising sheer out of the now turbulent sea.

One of the survivors, the last known to have seen Kitchener alive, reported that he was in the gunroom lying flat immediately after the explosion. Kitchener, it was thought, must have been wearing his heavy great-coat to ward off the cold. Thus restricted in his movements, he must have been one of the first to drown.



**T**HE rumours that he was still alive, however, spread fast. They were further fanned by his sister, Mrs. Parker. She foolishly encouraged and supported them. Some others favoured the idea of Kitchener sheltering in a cave on some remote island in the scattered Hebrides. Many others felt that he was betrayed to the Germans and had been taken prisoner.

The German High Seas Fleet had at that time been preparing to challenge the British Grand Fleet in what was to be the Battle of Jutland. The exits from Scapa Flow must have then been mined by them.

But it seems the majority of the British public

was not ready to accept the death of their hero. Colonel Fitzgerald's body was eventually washed ashore and found, but Kitchener's, no doubt, was swallowed by the angry Atlantic.

Many young people today know Kitchener's face better than his name. His famous recruiting poster, 'Your Country Needs You', of 1914 has become part of the youth culture of the seventies.

In his lifetime Kitchener was a legend. After his death, he became a subject of speculation and a source of mystery. People could never completely believe that he had died on June 6, 1916.

(Courtesy : BIS)





# RAMAN

## The Makings of a Nobel Laureate

**I** WAS born with a copper spoon in my mouth. At my birth, my father was earning a magnificent salary of Rs. 10 per month." Thus reminisced C.V. Raman, at a students' gathering when he was in his early sixties.

From this humble beginning, he grew up to become a well-known physicist, the discoverer of the Raman Effect on Light in 1928, that won him the 1930 Nobel Prize for Physics. We have just celebrated the Golden Jubilee of this great discovery.

The life story of Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman is, indeed, a saga of determination to achieve high goals, despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Born on November 7, 1888, Raman was the eldest of three brothers and two sisters. His father was a poor school-teacher, but slowly, by sheer hard work, he rose to become Professor of Mathematics and Physics in Vizagapatam College in the present day Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh

which was then a part of the Madras Presidency.

Even as a young child, Raman was of a very independent nature. He did not depend much on his parents, for either his school fee or his pocket-money. In the school his class teachers were amazed to find him display knowledge normally not expected of a child of his age. Raman got three double promotions, which helped him pass his Matriculation at the incredibly young age of 12.

He joined the prestigious Madras Presidency College in 1900. Raman, in his simple attire, looked so much out of place in that fashionable highbrow institution, that William Jones, his Professor of Physics, stopped him one day, and asked him if he had strayed into the college by mistake. Raman was not at all ruffled. With confidence he replied, "No, Sir. I'm a *bona fide* student."

Raman had a tremendous self-confidence. During his university days, Raman told his already over-awed classmates that he would top in the examinations. And he did! He got his B.A. Degree at the age of 16 and Master's Degree at 18, stand-

ing first class first in the whole of the Madras Presidency (which, for the purposes of university examinations, included Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of Karnataka and Kerala).

While still doing his post-graduation, Raman did original investigations in acoustics and optics. His work was published in the exclusive British journal 'Nature' and the 'Philosophical Magazine'.

Raman's personal needs were very few. Given to simple living, he needed no more than two dhotis, couple of shirts, and a coat. His sole ambition to which he dedicated himself was to do research work in physics. But, then, the need to support a large family and a number of other dependents forced him to take up a job.

In 1907, he sat for the Accounts Service Examination. He stood first and was appointed an officer in the Indian Finance Department. While in Government service, he was posted to Ran- goon, Nagpur, and other places. But a major part of his service years were spent in Calcutta,

It is not surprising that a man of his intelligence and dedication soon came to the notice of his British seniors. In 1917, he was tipped to become the first Indian Accountant General.

But, in the meantime his thesis, on which he, had assiduously worked at home in the evenings, won him a D.Sc. from Madras University. Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, the then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, was keen to utilise his services and offered him the Palit Professorship of Physics.

Here was a chance to pursue his childhood dream, thought Raman. He did not hesitate to accept the offer, though it meant some financial loss to him. This momentous decision laid the foundation for his many contributions to the world of science, including the Raman Effect on Light.

He occupied the Palit Professorship for 16 years, from 1917 to 1933. He did his research work in the laboratory of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. An ill-equipped laboratory, it was then situated in the crowded Bow Bazar Street. But, the noise, filth, and lack of equipment could not inhibit Raman from bringing forth, in 1928, his world famous discovery. Just imagine, only three equipment — a mercury lamp, a flask of benzene, and a direct vision pocket spectroscope — were available to him during his research work that won him the Nobel Prize.

Once, he told science students at a college gathering: "The essence of science is independent thinking and hard work, and not costly and sophisticated equipment. When I got my Nobel Award in 1930, I had spent hardly Rs. 200 on my entire set of equipment."

His unpretentious simplicity and a sense of humour are very well illustrated by an anecdote of his visit to Europe to receive the Nobel Prize. European scientists held a reception in his honour. They offered him a glass of champagne, when Raman exclaimed, "Ah, you want to celebrate the Raman Effect discovery by finding out the champagne effect on Raman!"

C.V. Raman died on Nov. 21, 1970 at the age of 82. His immortal discovery apart, he will always be remembered for his dedicated, single-minded devotion to the cause of science, for his simple habits, and his characteristic way of dressing — buttoned-up coat, white pants, and the white traditional turban of a South Indian scholar.

*J. Radhakrishnan*

## HOW and WHY

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*Anjali Krishna, Varanasi, asks: I have often heard people use the term 'the hard realities of life', but never quite understood it. Could you please enlighten me on the true implication or meaning of this phrase?*

I wonder how old you are. Whatever be your age, I am sure you are young enough not to find anything very hard to accept.

That, very simply, is what is implied by 'hard realities of life' — situations that are hard to accept. Young people normally do not have much experience of life and do not think deeply about things. Growing older, aspects of life like old age, sufferings, disease, death, social conditions that won't change, and personal limitations begin to bother them. They present situations that often can't be changed or done anything about them. In trying to alter them, they often find themselves unsuccessful and either mellow and adjust themselves or turn cynical and bitter. These hard to accept situations are called 'hard realities of life'. The phrase literally means something that is difficult to bear, but which necessarily exists.

It is very important to make one's peace with such over-bearing situations; otherwise, psychological problems occasionally affect a person. Such a person develops basic conflicts. He starts feeling anxious and tense. Once in a way, he develops hysterical symptoms to escape from this state of tension. Some serious cases of partial paralysis, loss of voice, aches and pains, etc, have been analysed by doctors, who have found the patients with nothing wrong physically. Such symptoms are said to be mentally induced, and its cure is said to be Psychotherapy rather than medicine.

*Meera Ramakrishnan*



# BUTTER

# FOR

# MOTHER



**R**AHUL'S mother sat in front of a mud pot. It had a lot of buttermilk in it. She was churning butter from it.

Round and round went the churu-stick.

Round and round went the buttermilk in the pot.

Out came the butter—fresh, white, and thick. Rahul's mother took it out with a spoon. She put it into a bowl of cold water.

The white butter turned hard.

Rahul sat on a stool beside his mother and clapped his hands. "Butter for mother.

Fresh butter for mother!"

Rahul's pet cat sat in a corner of the room. She kept a watch on the pot. Oooh, how delicious it looked! She wanted to drink up the buttermilk.

Every now and then, she cried, "Miaow miaow!" Was she saying, 'I want some buttermilk'?

Rahul's mother said, "Wait a while, pussy. till I make the butter."

"Miaow miaow," said the cat. Did she mean, 'I'm so hungry'?

Rahul's dog sat in another corner. He kept a watch all the time on the butter and the spoon.

Every now and then, he said, "Wuff wuff!" Was he saying, 'I want to lick the spoon'?

Rahul's mother said, "Wait a while, doggy, till I make the butter."

"Wuff wuff," said the dog. Did he mean, 'I'm so hungry'?

Rahul's mother continued to churn the butter. Rahul clapped his hands and said, "Butter for mother. Fresh butter for mother!"

A little rat peeped from his hole. It watched the pot of buttermilk. It watched the bowl of butter, too. It wished to eat some butter and sip some buttermilk, too.

Rahul's mother said, "I'm going to get some more water. All of you sit quiet."

She went into the kitchen to fetch some water.

The rat came running out of its hole. It jumped right into the pot of buttermilk.

It swam in the buttermilk. It ate a little butter. It sipped some buttermilk.

Then it jumped out of the pot and ran away.

The pot fell down and broke.

The buttermilk spilt on the floor. The floor drank it all up.

The cat got angry and ran after the rat.

The dog ran after the cat.

And Rahul ran after the dog

Rahul's mother came back with the water and found no one in the room.

The rat ran on and on. It jumped onto a hay-cart.

The cat jumped after the rat.

The dog jumped after the cat.

Rahul jumped after the dog.

The rat jumped off the hay-cart and hid in a bush. The cat found him and ate him up.

The dog found the cat and chased her away.

Rahul went after the dog and chased him away.

Rahul's mother ran out to meet them. She took Rahul in her lap and kissed him.

Rahul's mother set up another pot of buttermilk and began to churn butter.

Rahul sat on her lap and clapped his hands. "Butter for mother. Fresh butter for mother!"

*Raj Kinger*

## AROUND THE WORLD

I am going round the world—  
The world which I love;  
I can see rivers flowing,  
And birds flying merrily above;  
I can see ships sailing,  
And people dancing and singing;  
I can see clouds raining heavily around,  
All this from an aeroplane, not from the  
ground.

*Anirban Goswami (9)  
India*

# UNDER THE BIG TOP

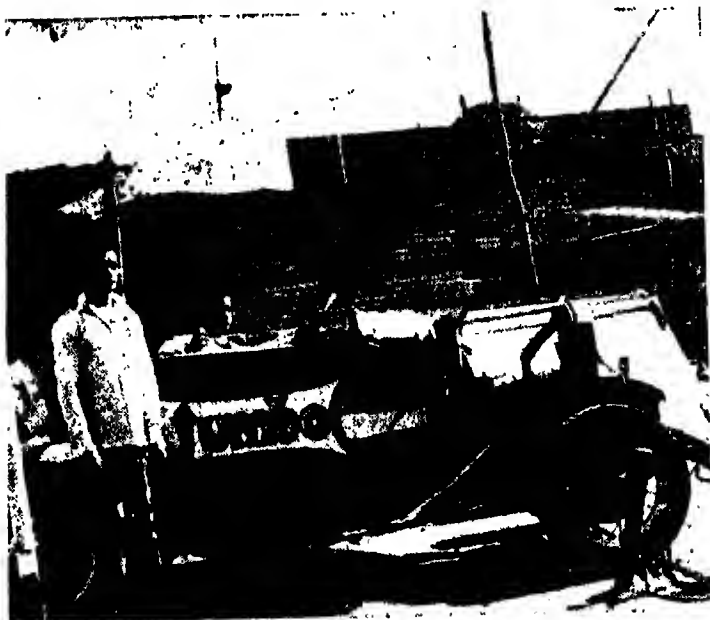
**I**N MY childhood, I had heard that circus folks are unfriendly and that they shirk away from strangers. I had wanted to find out whether there is any truth in this and wished to know more about their life. With this in mind, my friend Rituraj Goel and I visited the Jumbo Circus during its recent visit to New Delhi.

The truth is that with training, rehearsals, and the three 2½-hour shows everyday, all the year round, life under the big top can really be boring, and one can understand if the circus artistes feel lonely, despite the crowd that is attracted to them. Moreover, because of a general lack of education, they can never touch any higher levels of cultural exchange.

On arrival at the circus grounds, the manager, Mr. Rajan, greeted us warmly and heartily agreed to permit us inside the living quarters to spend sometime among the circus people. And this is what we saw:

Scene 1: The ringmaster steps into the ring. An idol of Siva is placed on a stool in the ring

The author at the steering wheel of the Jumbo jolopy



Beffoon Ramji Singh

and the elephants, first one by one and then collectively, go through all the routine rites of a puja! Shankar Puja Torat is one of the famous ringmasters in the circus world. He had worked with different circus companies, besides been acting in animal films like 'Hathi Mera Sathi', 'Janwar Aur Insaan', 'Janwar Aur Baalak'. Mr. Torat was born in Karnataka. His father was engaged in a business dealing in horses. Even in a young age, Mr. Torat thus became interested in animals. While in the 9th class, he left studies and joined a circus. Mr. Torat is now an expert trainer of all kinds of animals. He believes in training them by love, not by whiplashes.

We were led to a mahout, Mushtakh Khan. He is from Kerala, and had been working with different circuses for the last 20 years. When we met him, he was busy training a baby elephant. We asked him about training of animals, and he told us that the first quality we need is patience. "We think it wonderful how tame elephants can be. If they wished, they could kill a man as easily as we kill a fly! But by patience, love and care, we can tame them easily." Strangely, Mushtakh Khan has taken a vow not to permit his own children



One of the ring boys

to take up circus jobs, because he feels that life in a circus is very hard. He 'introduced' us to the elephant Jumbo, after whom the circus has been named.

Scene 2: They are Hitler, Jimmy, Brandy, Whisky, and Molly — all pomeranian dogs. A middle-aged lady performs with them in the circus ring. They are busy at the 'Number Adding' act. Mrs. Damayandi loves her dogs as if they are her own children.

From dogs to bears — and their trainer is Mr. Vincent. He, too, belongs to Kerala. He told us that bears are rather difficult animals to teach. Unlike many others, Mr. Vincent feels that in circus one can have a jolly life. For one thing, you get many chances to see different places. Mr. Vincent looks forward to the day when he can perform balancing feats in the circus ring.

Scene 3: A Sardarji is driving a jalopy. Mullaji and Panditji are riding in it. Mem Saheb pleads for a lift and Sardarji heartily agrees. From then on, nothing goes okay with the car. One by one, its parts start falling away! And you laugh your sides apart: in fact, it is the job of these buffoons to make *you* laugh.

Mr. Ramji Singh has been engaged by the Jumbo Circus as a clown, mainly because he is a midget.

He has been in the circus profession only for two years now. He is quite happy with the circus life, especially because his co-performers love him and like him. And everyday he gets a chance to make the audience laugh with his foolish acts. Mr. Ramji Singh learns his tricks with the help of the ring-master.

Scene 4: Mr. Mohan Dass was practising skating when we requested him to spare us a few minutes. He acts both as a clown and a juggler. He first joined a circus company when he was only seven. Mr. Dass revealed to us that 99 percent of the circus folks are from Kerala.

We then met another juggler, Mr. Ram Kumar Maitra. He is a native of Dacca. It appears he had run away from home because of the cruelty of his stepmother. In circus he began as a stable boy. Step by step, he learned most of the juggling feats. Mr. Maitra personally doesn't like this life, and wants his children to go for higher education.

Scene 5: A young boy of seven performs the Plastic Bone feats along with a little girl, Anju. Ganesh and his sister are happy with their present life. When asked if he wouldn't like to perform the Rope-walking and Horse-riding feats, he

Circus artistes attend to other everyday chores.  
(Photographs by Rituraj Goel)



replied they were girls' acts! Ganesh's ambition is to learn the death-defying tricks in the air.

Kamla, like Ganesh, performs the Plastic Body feats. From early life, she has been interested in performing the Plastic Body and "dental" feats. Her brother, too, is in circus but working for another company. She looked quite happy with her circus life.

Scene 8: When we entered the main tent, a middle-aged man was giving instructions to some children. Mr. P. Krishna performs on the horizontal bar. Once he himself owned a circus. He has all love and affection for his wards.

Miss Shobha's bicycle feats are just incredible. She is a cheerful teenager of 15. She had earlier worked for some circus companies in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

A circus will feel lost without its ring boys! They attend to most of the pre-performance work. Take, for instance, D.C. Rana, from Gazipur, near Banaras. When he was in the 9th class, he had

a quarrel with another student and this prompted him to run away from school. On the way, he saw a big top. He couldn't resist watching the show and he was thus attracted towards the circus. At first, he worked as a stable boy and later became a ring boy. Rana is thrilled by the acrobatic acts on the swing, and has managed to learn them a bit.

Muhammad Aslam, another ring boy, has 15 years experience in circus. He has no specific contract and has only to be present during the duty hours. He, therefore, gets a lot of time to look around the town, and that is why he is happy.



You are among the audience, and the various artistes entertain you with their dangerous feats or foolish acts. A peep into their life can show us that they are not puppets. Their life is full of joys and sorrows, like that of any ordinary man.

Subhendu Mukherjee (13)  
India

## ANIMAL WORLD



# PUZZLES

## QUIZ

1. Who is the President of Bangladesh?
2. With what game is Deodhar Trophy associated?
3. When was the UNO founded?
4. India is the....largest country in the world.
5. ....is the country with the largest area in the world.
6. Which is the world's tallest free-standing structure?
7. ....is a product of respiration.
8. What is the weight of 1 litre of hydrogen gas?
9. When did Lenin die?
10. Who wrote 'My India'?

*Indranil Acharya (13)*

## RIDDLE-ME-REE

1. What will happen if the boy with you is thrown into the sea?
2. What can make a bird fly?
3. What makes a boat float?
4. Why does the monkey hang on to the branch by his tail?
5. Which table has three legs?
6. What has three heads, three tails, and three legs?
7. Which clock has its hands turning anti-clockwise?
8. Father busy, mother lazy, and all twelve children are black.
9. Tally daddy, hairy mummy, baldy children.
10. When is a farmer cruel to his corn?
11. Which is quicker, hot or cold?
12. How many sides has a circle?
13. What do you keep after giving it to someone else?
14. What is the sweetest lesson?
15. Which is lighter than a feather though a hundred men cannot lift it?

*Padmaja Nair*

## MENTAL TEASERS

1. What is the connection between ape and tape?
2. How can old glitter?
3. I am in the middle with both sides 'on'.
4. What is that fruit from which if you strike off one letter it becomes a vegetable?
5. If you take away my eye, I may not become blind, but I'll sure go mad! Who am I?
6. Which fruit contains the name of a boy?
7. I am a small battle-field. Who am I?
8. If you will add a ton to a furniture, it will become very, very light. What is it?
9. I am invisible; I am very useful; yet people are afraid of me. Who am I?

*Venkatesh Chari (11)*

## ANSWERS

### Quiz

1. Ziaur Rahman, 2. Cricket, 3. 1945,
4. Seventh, 5. The USSR, 6. The C.N. Tower,
7. Carbon dioxide or water, 8. 0.09 gms,
9. 1924, 10. Jim Corbett.

### Riddle-Me-Ree

1. The B-U-O-Y will float, of course; 2. It is just impossible. The bird is a bird and the fly is an insect; 3. The water around it;
4. So that he should not dash to the ground on his head; 5. Any table with one of its legs broken; 6. A three-legged table with three coins on it; 7. The clock in the mirror; 8. A clock; 9. A coconut tree; 10. At harvest time, when he must pull its ears; 11. Hot is quicker, because we can catch cold; 12. Two; inside and outside; 13. Your word; 14. History, because it is full of dates; 15. Shadow.

# How Matryoshkas Are Born

**"MATRYOSHKA"** nests of dolls, which nestle one inside the other, are now well-known throughout the world and are in great demand.

These are made, not in remote villages nor in the rolling steppes nor in the deep woods. They are made by a woman right in the heart of Moscow.

Inna Trifonova stays in a flat. There is a pervading odour of paint, lacquer and wood shavings. Two rooms there are full of Matryoshkas of every shape and size.

Every Matryoshka is a separate creation.

Inna starts with a little wooden dummy, sketches in the features with a pencil and then burns them with a heated tool.

The doll is then painted in oils. When it is dry, it gets several coats of lacquer and a final polish with a chamois leather.

It's not so easy as it sounds.

Traditionally, the Matryoshka is a pretty girl, but there have long been other things—awe-inspiring warriors, goblins, monkeys, and even mushrooms.

Inna's collection includes 18-nest ones, matryoshka musical boxes, and transistor radios.

In ancient Russia, people used to make painted Easter eggs one inside the other, but the nest-of-dolls came from Japan about a hundred years ago.

It all began in Abramtsevo, on the outskirts of Moscow, in an old Russian country-house, which was a favourite haunt of famous painters like Repin, Serov, Vasnetsov, and Korovin, who wanted to foster and preserve folk arts.

One day, one of them brought a nest of wooden dolls—a little Japanese and his whole family.

They liked it so much that they asked Vasily Zvezdochkin, a master doll-maker of Zagorsk, to make something similar.

He came up with a buxom matron wearing a sarafan, with her little boys and girls inside her, the last being a babe in swaddling clothes.

That's how the first Matryoshka was born.

When they became popular in Russia, the Japanese tried to make 'Russian' ones, without much success! They, therefore, dropped the idea and started buying real Russian ones.

Matryoshkas first became known in the West when they were shown at the Paris World Fair in 1900. Today they are bought by a large number of countries.

*Eduard Grafov*

*(Pictures on facing page)*

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## Answers to Mental Teasers

1. Ape imitates the actions of people, while tape imitates their voice; 2. By adding the letter 'g' to it; 3. O-N-I-O-N; 4. Pear and Pea; 5. Maid—by removing 'i' (eye), you get 'mad'; 6. Jack-fruit; 7. Chess; 8. Cot+ton; 9. Electricity.

## HELD OVER

The concluding chapters of "Ramu in Orbit" and "The Story of Auto-racing," and Pen-Friends column are held over for the next issue.—Editor



# Nest-of-Dolls

*(See story alongside)*





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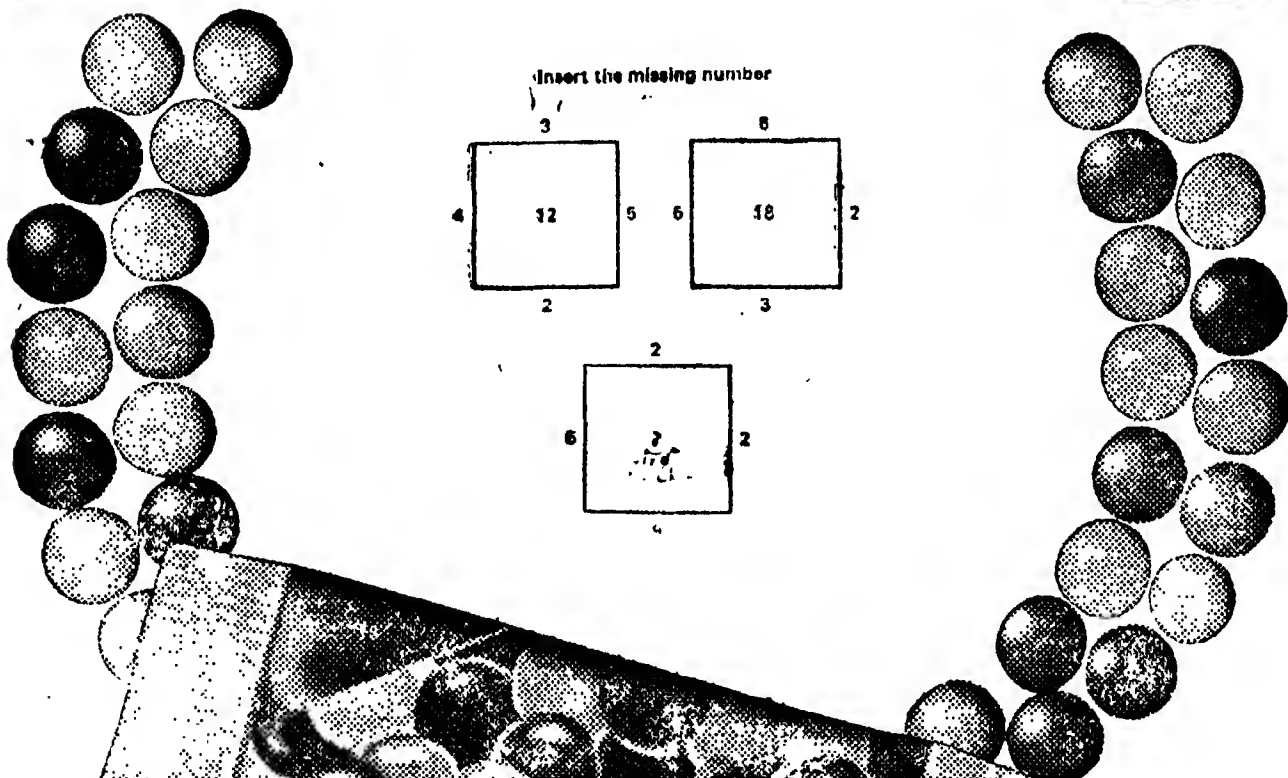
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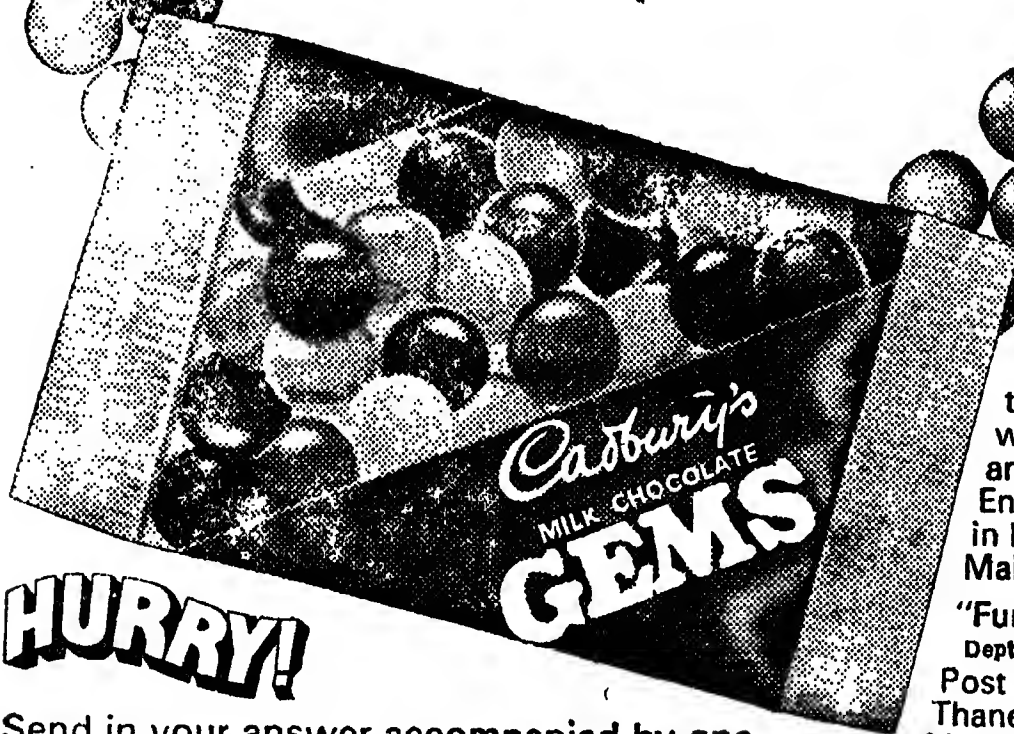
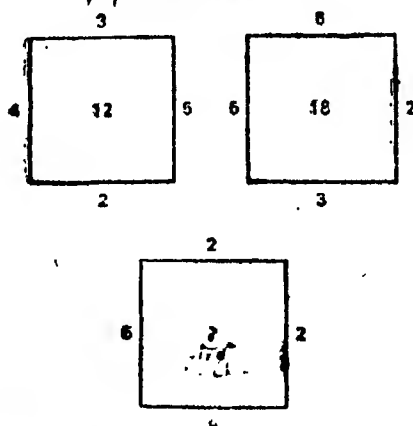
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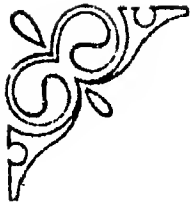
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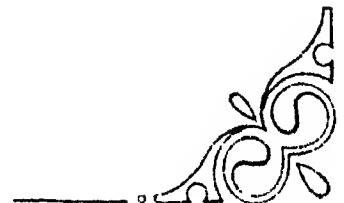
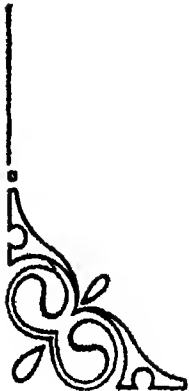
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Cover : 'Kite-flying' by Katrin Bastian (5) German Democratic Republic

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THEY were all very scared of it, the people of Dalkania, frightened and petrified by the Chowgarh tiger, the man-eating monster, who had taken the lives of so many people. Women would not dare breath his name, and the old folk whispered, "This is no tiger. This is an evil spirit, in the disguise of a tiger."

The people of Dalkania shivered and stayed close to their village, keeping the cattle inside their sheds, not allowing the children to play and swim in the clear waters of the nearby river.

But life had to go on and work had to be done. The wheat was to be sown and grass had to be cut to feed the hungry cattle. Sham Lal Negi shaded his eyes and looked over the beautiful hills of Kumaon. His eyes flew over the dense forests, the terraced fields and slopes, covered with soft green grass. He stretched his broad muscular shoulders and powerful arms, with which he had won many a wrestling competition. There was nobody in the whole village who could compare with him in strength. Sham Lal was young, strong and handsome. His wife was a beautiful woman who cooked the best meat 'pullau' in the whole of Kumaon. And he had a little son of eight years, who showed promise of growing up into a healthy and strong man like he himself. Sham Lal smiled as his eyes fell on the slender body of the boy nearby who was cutting grass, bundeling it up in his arms, and carrying it to the belt of trees where the ground was level.

Sham Lal stooped down near the edge of a slope to continue his work. He was just about to tie a bundle when he heard the rustling of grass in front of him. But before he could straighten up or step aside, he felt a ton of weight crashing down on him and felt teeth being buried into both sides of his head, missing his eyes by a millimetre, but cutting deep into a part of his neck. He was pressed backwards on the ground, with a tiger's whole weight on top of him. For a second they lay motionless, man and beast

chest to chest, the tiger's stomach between his legs. Automatically Sham Lal's hands searched the ground for a weapon, for his sickle, or something he could thrust into the tiger's eyes. But all he could find or get hold of was an oak sapling, which he grasped tightly with both hands. He knew that he had to rely solely on the strength of his hands, shoulders and arms.

He felt the tiger tighten his grip; he could hear the bones of the right side of his face crackle. An immense, unbearable pain shot through his whole body, racked his whole being and blurred his mind for a second. But Sham Lal did not allow himself to fall unconscious, to die that very day between the jaws of the deadly Chowgarh tiger.

Very cautiously, and concentrating all his senses on his movement, he drew his legs up on either side of the beast. Very gently he pulled them under his body and pressed first his left bare foot under the tiger's belly, and then his right. Then gritting his teeth, straining every muscle of his body, he pushed one hand under the beast's mighty chest and threw his feet upwards in a flash, lifting him off the ground and flung him away from him with all his might.

It was as if the tiger would take him along or would have torn his head off. But Sham Lal held on to the oak sapling, gripped it tight, gripped it even when he heard the tiger crash down the hillside, roaring furiously. He gripped it still when he heard the mountain echo and re-echo the tiger's terrible roar, that made people in the valley shiver with fear.

Sham Lal did not dare move, couldn't move, in fact was unable to move even a single muscle. A new spasm of pain racked his body. He gripped his head with his hands and felt blood running through his fingers, running down his arms and over his chest. He felt as if he had lost half of his head and was sure that he was bound to die. But before he died, he had to take his son to safety, take him back home. There he

would ask for the blessings of the priest, and then lay down his head and rest for ever.

Sham Lal rose on uncertain feet. He tried to look for his son but pain blurred his vision and robbed him of his voice. "Mo-hinder?" he called out feebly and suddenly felt a cold hand grasping his own. He heard his son whisper, "Father, Father! What has happened?"

"Nothing, son," replied Sham Lal, "help me up and guide me home. Let me wrap your loin cloth around my head, maybe that will stop the bleeding. Now, don't look at me, you hear? I'll be all right, son, just guide me home."

Sham Lal did not know how he reached his house that day. He held on to the little hand in his, gripped it hard. And whenever another spasm of pain shook his body, it was this little hand he held to which ulti-

mately led him home.

There he sank exhausted on his 'charpoy,' too weary to do or say anything except "Wife, call the priest and call all my friends, too. I want to see their faces before I die."

But Sham Lal Negi did not die. His strength and willpower made him recover from his near fatal wounds. He lived on with a face no man could look at without repulsion, without turning away with a feeling of fright and pity.

But his enemy lived on, too, claiming victim after victim till, one day, on April 11, 1930, the murderous Chowgarh tiger fell down at the feet of Jim Corbett. The Chowgarh tiger was dead—the tiger that had taken the lives of 64 persons, and injured more than that, was no more.

*Sigrun Srivastava*

## FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY

# NIOBE

"**W**EEPING like a Niobe" is quite a common phrase in English.

Niobe, a grandchild of Zeus and Atlas, and married to King Amphion, was a very proud and haughty woman. She was particularly proud of the fact that she had seven sons and seven daughters. One day, she even disparaged Leto, for having just two children, the twins Apollo and Artemis. Mante, the prophetic daughter of the blind seer, Teiresias, overheard this boast, and advised the women of Thebes to placate Leto and her children.

The women immediately followed her sage advice, by burning incense and wreathing their hair with laurel branches. However, hardly had the sacrificial rites commenced when they were interrupted by a furious Niobe. She demanded an explanation why they were honouring Leto, a woman of obscure antecedents; moreover, she had only a manly daughter and an effeminate son. The vain and silly woman shouted that even if she lost a couple of her children, she would still be better off than Leto!

The terrified women abandoned the sacrifice and offered prayers to Leto, as Niobe

continued shouting imprecations and ridiculing Leto. But their efforts at propitiating Leto were too late. She had already sent Apollo and Artemis to avenge her. Armed with their bows and arrows, they rushed to obey their mother. Apollo discovered Niobe's sons hunting, killed all of them except Amyclas, who had wisely offered a propitiatory prayer to Leto. Likewise, Artemis riddled Niobe's daughters with arrows, as they sat at their spinning, except Meliboea, who had followed her brother's example. These two then hastened to erect a temple to Leto as a peace offering.

Niobe now bitterly repented her folly, but in vain. She wept and mourned for her dead children, for nine days and nine nights. There was no one even to bury them, for Zeus, in his anger, had turned the Thebans to stone.

Niobe, worn with grief and weeping, and fearing further reprisals, fled to her home. Zeus at last took pity on her, and turned her into a statue, which still weeps copiously every summer.

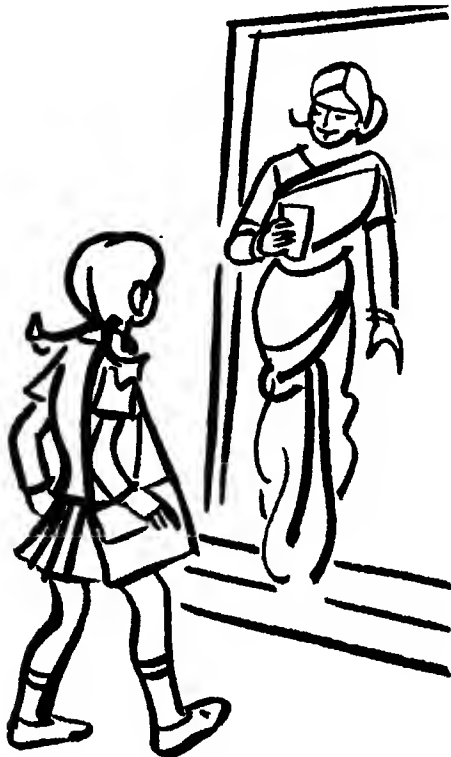
*Geeta Chowdhry*

# Happiness Is...

WE often hear people talk about happiness... we often say we're happy — happiness expressed in so many different ways and for so many different reasons — it often makes me wonder what happiness really is, and I find it difficult to answer the question. All I know is that happiness means different things to different people! Anyway, I'd like to share with you a little of what happiness is to me.

I wonder whether we appreciate those little, insignificant moments of bliss that crowd every day of our lives. Moments which are usually lost in the totality of the day, moments that come and go unnoticed and moments usually forgotten as soon as they pass away. But moments which are really *the* moments of every day, and which really make life worth living.

For instance, there was that gloomy day when everything seemed to go wrong... you got up late, Amma was angry, you missed the bus, you were late for school, the class test was nerve-racking, you grazed yourself badly at P.T., your best friend was absent, there were ants in your lunch-box...



boy, were you a wreck by the time you got home! But there was Amma waiting for you with an icy glass of nimbu-pani and a big kiss... Much later, at play, you were able to laugh as you described the lousy day to your friends, though you didn't realize it then, it was really that 'barely there' moment of Amma's loving kiss that changed your day for you. All in a moment.

And, then, there was that terrible day you got an 'F' grade in your History paper. It was so humiliating... no one (not even you) remembered the 'A' you got in the last paper. You had to put up with the stares of your classmates — some pitying, some 'serves you right'. At home Amma and Appa didn't say anything, but you knew you had let them down... that was an awful day, wasn't it? You can't remember *anything* worthwhile... but one second — what about Seetha? You didn't really register the squeeze of her hand just then, but now you remember... she saw the grade, but she didn't say a thing, not a word. She just squeezed your hand, ever so slightly, and you smiled at her gratefully... and in that tiny moment of that terrible day lay the strength of love and friendship, a strength which lets you look away from that day with hope for the future. And remember? You got another 'A' in History the very next week.

Or take that Sunday. Nothing special happened; in fact, it was a very ordinary day. But, that night you picked up your diary and you wrote:

"Dear Dairy, today was beautiful. Just beautiful. But don't ask me why. Love, Me."

And what *was* that undefinable thing which made that Sunday so beautiful (Or for that matter, which makes most Sundays so beautiful)?

Looking back, you remember the many insignificant things about that day which combined to make it a perfect one... everyone was at home, and relaxed, ... the weather was perfect... Amma had made your favourite 'subzi' for lunch ... Appa let you type that important letter ... you were wearing your favourite, most comfortable dress... Your hair was washed beautifully... your bike's puncture was fixed... you had finished your home-

work...your kite flew so high you could hardly see it. Your favourite programme was on the radio....Amma had baked a cake with coffee-chocolate icing and she let you lick the bowl.... You played 'King and Queen' and you were the last one to be out and you were 'King' ....Appa had bought ju-jups from the store in his 'wonder-bag'. It's not that the day was good because nothing bad happened; it's just that it was filled to the brim with those tiny moments of happiness which you didn't notice, but which lingered on imperceptibly anyway.

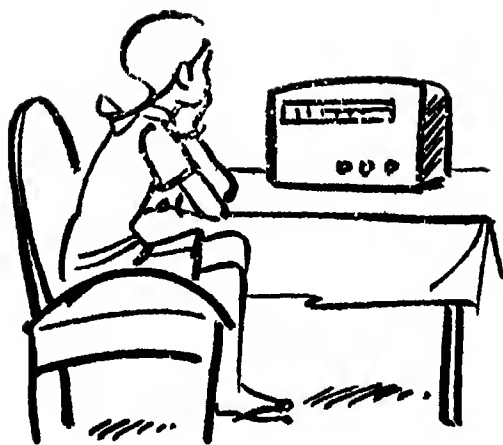
And take the day your School Final results were out. How sweet it was to share that moment with your old school-pals, friends with whom you had shared some of the best years of your life. The proud tears in your parents' eyes, the slap-on-the back congratulations from your brother. The result might be just 'good', not even 'outstanding' or 'extraordinary', but you've done your best, and everyone's thrilled about it, and you consciously shake hands with your neighbours all evening. But even on a day so full of gladness as this, you might remember one special person whose congratulations did something very special for that special day...your parents. perhaps, whose quiet words told you they're proud of you...or your brother's unusual hug...or even that special friend whose "I'm so proud of you" echoes in your consciousness long afterwards, and still fills you with an indescribable warmth.

There are other days, too...the kind that stands out in your life unforgettably. Like that long, anxious day at the hospital, waiting for the brother you'd waited for so long already...and then that single blinding, beautifully blissful moment when the Nurse beckoned to you and you ran wildly and looked at the tiny, beautiful bundle she held in her arms. Your brother. Your hands trembled so much you couldn't touch that soft wonder which was gazing at you with intent, unseeing eyes...(you didn't know till much later that you weren't allowed to, anyway.) You were crying, but you didn't know it till Appa told you he'd never seen anyone cry of joy before he saw you. The joy lingered on, and comes back each time you look at your brother...but ten years later, you don't remember the rejoicing or the sweets that followed. You only remember that single, sublime, supremely sweet second...and it's the memory of *that* second that makes that day the Day of your life.



But, happiness doesn't always spring from happiness. There's so much happiness in very sad memories, too. Shakespeare called it 'sweet sorrow' in the context of Romeo and Juliet, but I think Anne of Avonlea put it best when she said 'very softly', "you wouldn't want it to stop hurting ... you wouldn't want to forget — even if you could." Of course, there was no joy, no gladness when you had to say good-bye to your best friend. There was heartache, there were tears. Even time can't lessen the distance now...but there is some strange sad sweetness in the memory of that last walk together, in that final hand-clasp at the little twirling gate...in the memories of all the things you've done together, all the laughter you've shared ... memories which make you sentimental, nostalgic; even sad...but memories you wouldn't forget for anything in the world. And what makes these sad memories so sweet is what usually makes them so sad in the first place — love. You're sad when you have to say good-bye, because you love your friend — but it's this love that makes the past so precious and that colours your memories with so much happiness....

I said that happiness is often made of insignificant memories of insignificant moments. Snoopy used to describe these little, precious moments in his 'Happiness Is...' columns (I don't know if he still does). 'Happiness is a pile of leaves', 'a fuzzy sweater', 'blowing a gum-bubble', 'knowing all the answers'....you remember that enormous pile of leaves in the park last fall and the fun you had jumping on and falling into it...that beautiful, soft, fuzzy green sweater Amma knitted



for you....the day you taught your little brother to blow gum-bubbles...that day in the Arithmetic class, when you were the only one who could understand Ratio and Proportion.

And more, Snoopy-style: Happiness is the first, sweet memory you have of your mother.

Happiness is the first red 'shahetut' of summer, the first juicy 'jamun' of June.

Happiness is a terriswheel ride...happiness is getting stuck at the top.

Happiness is meeting your best pal after the summer vacation. Happiness is the day you were elected school captain...or the day your friend got more votes than you and you found you weren't jealous...

Happiness is the big neem tree outside, happiness is climbing it and the four parrots that live on it. Happiness is when the 'aadu' tree outside your window blooms into a pink and white beauty in early spring...or the fragrance of 'shafali' floating through the soft summer night.

Happiness is the first red rose of winter, the first mango on your tree.

Happiness is dipping your feet into the stream-let on the ridge...watching the sunrise in late May...listening to the peacocks sing in rainy July and watching the raindrops later.

Happiness is window-shopping on Saturday evening ....happiness is your favourite radio programme.

Happiness is a Diwali 'patakha' ..... a Holi balloon....carols on Christmas Eve.

Happiness is midnight on New Year's Eve. Happiness is the wind in the willows...or your favourite book.

Happiness is a green pen that doesn't leak.

Happiness is the letter you've waited for so long ...a request on the radio.

Happiness is in loving, in remembering...in making a new friend, in remembering one who is far away. As a friend of mine so beautifully put it, "Isn't it nice to know that to share, there's always someone, just 'there'?"

Happiness is that someone who's always 'there' ...happiness is sitting with him or her on a hill-lock and watching the late November sunset behind the eucalyptus trees.

Happiness is a walk in the rain minus an umbrella...a candle-lit evening...dreaming about all those "wine-touched moments of future unborn".

Happiness is the most precious thing in the world, and the Hope stored in one's heart is Hope for Happiness: Be it from tiny, insignificant moments, be it from sadness, be it from joy, happiness *is* happiness — whatever the source, the result is the same.

But these are just some of *my* feelings about happiness...and, as I said at the beginning, there are as many different meanings of happiness as there are people. We'd love to share *your* thoughts about Happiness, too....What Happiness means to *you*, what kind of thing gives *you* happiness. So, please do write in and tell us all about it that would make *us* very happy!

Minpy

## LIFE IS SORROW AND FUN

I peeped into the dark nooks—  
Life seemed dull and glum,  
I peeped into the bright brooks—  
Life seemed joy and fun,

I cried  
Life cried,  
I laughed  
Life laughed,

And then my heart seemed to say—  
'Life is sorrow and fun'.

Vivek  
India

## HELD OVER

The features, 'The Story of Auto-racing', 'How and Why', and 'Pen-friends Corner', are held over and will appear next month.  
—Editor



## The Blue Jackal

A jackal named Fierce Howl  
In a city for food began to prowl.  
On seeing him the dogs began to snap  
and bite

Thus putting the poor jackal to flight.  
The curs chased him into an indigo vat  
Where now all blue in colour he sadly sat.  
Destined by Nature to survive  
He climbed out and into the forest arrived.  
Deciding to take advantage of his state  
He made other creatures feel that he was

great.  
Some animals scared were prepared to  
vamoose  
While still others on seeing him let all hell  
loose.

Fierce Howl bossed over everyone, small or  
big,  
All were subservient, from the lion down  
to the pig.  
He made his brother jackals do all sorts of  
odd things  
And behaved like a tyrant—a king of kings.

One day a pack of jackals began to moan,  
Hearing the sound, Fierce Howl replied  
in a shrill tone.

On hearing his howls the animals' anger  
grew  
And surrounding him they gave him his  
just due.

Hence, whoever corrupt power begins to  
cherish,  
Like the foolish jackal will soon perish.

(Adapted from 'The Panchatantra' by Shiv Dhawan)



**Y**ESTERDAY dad and mom had a visitor—an uncle from Bombay who brought me a big box of toffee. It was the biggest box I'd ever seen, with red roses all over it.

The first thing I did when he left was to carry the box to my room, take off all that gummy tape around it and open it. Boy! Was there a lot of toffee! My sister Rita came rushing up and we both sat down to count. It took ages—there were 78 toffees. Then Ritu and I had three each—which made it 72, then Sonu, our puppy, came up and we gave him one. He sniffed at it and would have gulped it down with the paper but Ritu stopped him in time. She took off the paper, tore it up and gave him the toffee. When he had eaten it, he wagged his tail and asked for more. But by then it was dinner time and Mummy came to call us to the table. She picked up the box, telling us we had had enough sweets for one day.



I ate up all the rice and dal and vegetables in my plate quickly, thinking all the time of the toffee. Afterwards we had to brush our teeth, and put on our pyjamas, and put away all our toys and say our prayers, and hop into bed. All this time I was eyeing the toffee box lying on a table in the corner of the room.

When I got into bed I didn't feel like sleeping. Ritu, who had hardly been able to keep her eyes open through dinner, whispered good night and nodded off. My rag doll Tiny, who always sleeps in my bed, looked restless. I thought I'd get her some toffee—so I got up, opened the box and grabbed a handful of toffees. When I came back to bed, Tiny was fast asleep, so I chewed the toffees up one by one—keeping for the last a yummy chocolate-coated one. Then I dropped off to sleep too.

Suddenly I woke up and heard a small voice say, "Oh, oh, oh, oh, get off me pleeease!" I jumped up with a real start. There was no one in the room—only the moon shining in and he couldn't have such a tiny voice, I thought. Then I heard a rustle in my bed and there was a little toffee paper rising up.

"Oh, oh you crushed me. I must smooth-en my dress and rush or I'll be late," it said. I was so surprised I couldn't say anything. Then a little bell rang out somewhere in the air and another voice squeaked,

"Wake up, wake up, wake up all  
It's time for the toffee ball."

And, believe it or not, there on the floor, the toffee papers began to gather together. They floated in from all over the room—all the wrappings from the toffees we'd eaten assembled in the middle of the carpet! There were pink ones and blue ones, and red ones and yellow ones, one had little pineapples all over its dress, it was a pineapple flavoured one!

A big chocolate coloured one played on a drum, another strummed a guitar and all the others danced round them singing loudly.

"Oh we're happy toffees  
Happy to be free  
We'll dance all night  
On our toesies.  
Dance and sing and strum  
Dance and play the drum  
Ho hum ho hum!"

I stared and stared and stared! Then away in the corner I saw another toffee paper—but she wasn't dancing at all. So I bent right over to ask her what was wrong. I found that she was crying softly to herself.

"What's the matter, Miss Pink Toffec Paper?" I asked.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh," she sobbed, "I can't go to the ball, someone tore my dress up." And sure enough there was a big rent right across the middle of her pink and white gown.

"Gosh, that's the one Ritu tore up. I thought.

"Why do you want to dance?" I asked.

"Oh," said Miss Toffec Paper, "every night all the toffee papers, whose toffees have been eaten, get together. They are happy that they don't have to carry the toffees any more, they feel better and lighter, so they dance. But someone tore my dress. Now I can't go to the ball, and tomorrow I'll just end up on a rubbish heap. Oh, oh, oh!"

"Well" I said, "I can fix you up, if you'll allow me."

I found some scotch tape and mended the tear. Miss Pink Toffee Paper gave me a low bow and waltzed off to the dance.

Oh, how they whirled and twirled and sang and swung around! Then when the clock struck twelve, they flew right out of the window. "Good-bye," squeaked Miss Pink Toffee Paper as she floated out. And that's the last I ever heard of her and all the other toffee papers.

*Sujata Madhok*

# SALT THAT MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

ONCE three brothers lived with their parents in a big Russian port town. The two elder brothers were smart chaps, but Ivan, the youngest, was considered a simpleton by his father and his friends. Ivan often secretly wished he could do something worthwhile—something big that his father would be proud of.

One day, his father, who was a merchant, called Ivan's two brothers and gave them tall ships with a large crew each. He asked them to put to sea and earn their own living.

Ivan went to his father and said, "Father, please, give me a ship, so that I, too, can earn fame and fortune."

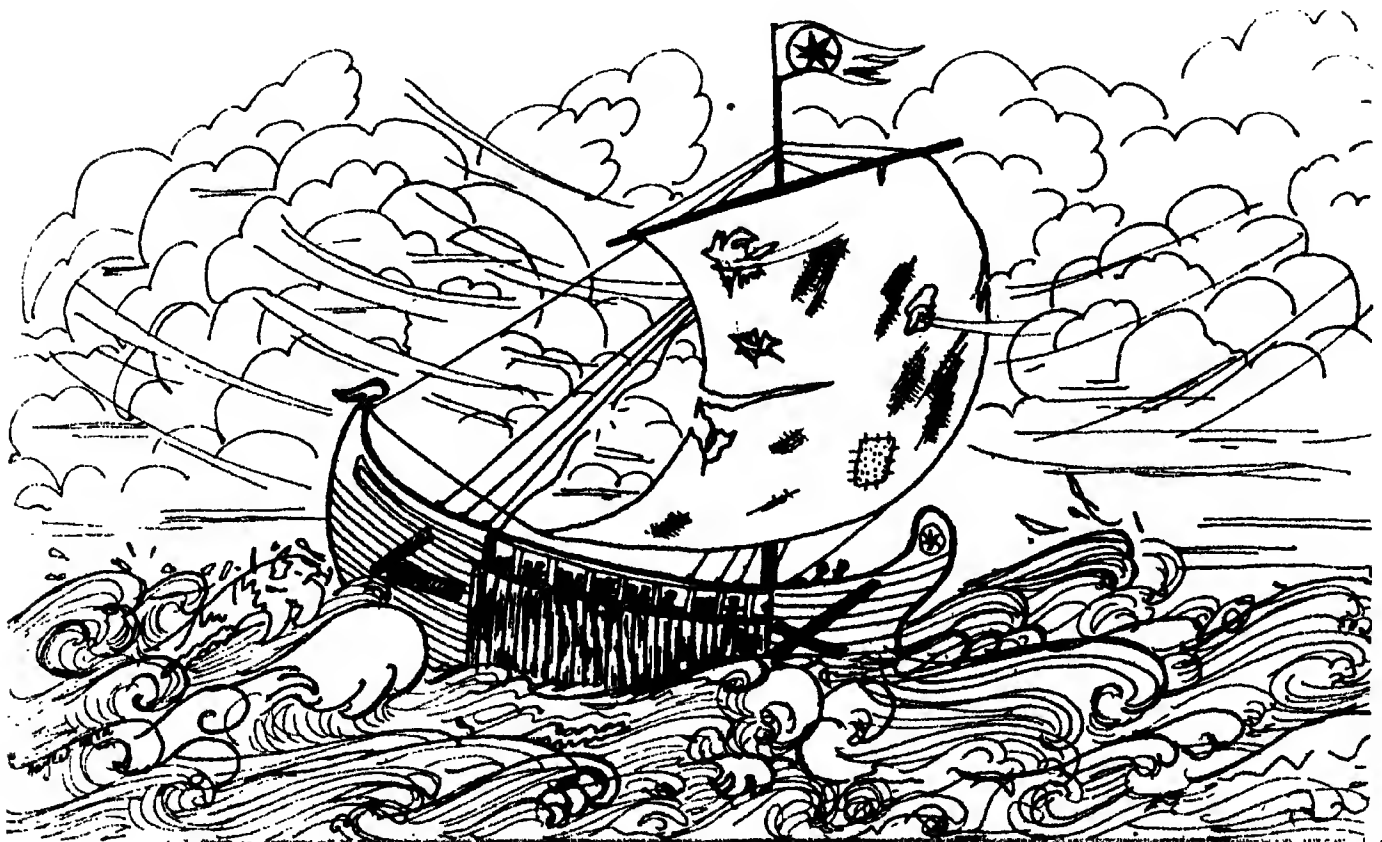
But his father only laughed and told him, "It will be useless to give you a ship, because you are a good-for-nothing fellow."

This made poor Ivan very, very sad. When his mother found out what Ivan wanted, she persuaded her husband to spare an old ship for him.

So Ivan was given the oldest ship, with all its paint chipped off, and no proper sails. The crew consisted of just twenty old sailors, close to retirement. But Ivan was quite content with whatever he got and wished to sail away, as quickly as possible.

Early next morning, Ivan set out in his ship to explore the wide, beautiful world. It was smooth and merry sailing for a couple of days. Then a great storm suddenly arose, and Ivan's ship tossed up and down like a huge balloon. It was blown right off course. The sails were torn, and when the storm was over, Ivan's old sailors squatted on the deck to make new sails, out of rags. As they were mending the sails, the ship neared a strange island. Lowering one of the little boats, Ivan rowed towards it.

He walked all over the island, but was surprised to find not a single living creature, nor any trees or grass. There was only a huge white mountain in the middle of the island. When he went close to the mountain, he



found that it was made entirely of some white powdery dust. He put a little of the dust in his mouth, and found that it was salt. 'Ah, ha!' thought he, 'this will fetch me good money.' So he rowed back to his ship as quickly as possible.

"My men!" he shouted excitedly. "Throw everything you have on the deck out into the sea, for I have indeed found my fortune."

Ivan's crew did as he said, and then followed him to the island in little boats. In no time they filled their ship with the precious cargo of salt. Then, they pulled up anchor and sailed off.

On and on they sailed till they could see the tall buildings of a beautiful city. They immediately anchored. Ivan told them, "I shall first take a sample of this salt to the king of this city and if he likes it, you can bring the rest of the stuff in bags."

Ivan was sure that the salt would fetch him a fortune. He knocked at the door of the king's palace and told the watchman that he wanted to see the king on some important business. He was taken to the king's presence. "What brings you here, young man?" asked the king.

Ivan showed him the white powder. The king had never seen salt before. He laughed on seeing the stuff, and called Ivan a fool for trying to sell him dust, and sent him away.

Ivan quietly slipped into the royal kitchen where the cooks were preparing the king's dinner. They were too busy to notice his presence. So, Ivan sat down in a corner and waited for his opportunity. When dinner was at last ready, the cooks went in to lay the table. While he was alone, Ivan quickly sprinkled some salt in all the dishes. The cooks came back and the dishes were, one after the other, carried to the dining hall.

Both the king and his queen that day really enjoyed their dinner. He called the cooks and said, "Today's food is the tastiest I've ever had. Did you add any new item?"

"No, your majesty," the cooks chorused.

The king was very surprised. "Was there anyone besides you in the kitchen, when dinner was being prepared?" he asked.

"Yes, now I remember, there was a young



man sitting in a corner in the kitchen," cried the senior cook.

"Bring him to me," the king ordered.

Ivan stood before the king a second time. "You? Were you in the kitchen to add that white stuff to the dishes?" roared the king.

"Yes, your majesty, it was the same white powder I showed you a while ago."

"Well, if it is the stuff that makes our food so tasty, will you sell it to me?" he asked Ivan.

"Most willingly, your majesty, but it is a rare and costly stuff," said Ivan.

"Don't you worry about the money," said the king, who was in very good humour after the grand dinner.

Ivan went back to his ship to tell his crew of their good fortune. They lost no time in carrying a hundred bags of salt to the palace. The king and his queen were very excited about the powder that had given a delicious taste to their food.

You can well imagine Ivan's joy at the sight of a hundred bags of gold, silver, and money that he got in exchange. He gave a part of it to all his loyal crew and kept the rest for himself.

He was now a rich man. He sailed home proudly. He had won the fame and fortune that he had only dreamed of till now. To his family and friends, he was no longer Ivan the fool, but a brave, adventurous, and wise merchant.

*(A Russian tale  
retold by Fifie Mendonca)*

GABBU

MAMA'S

ENDING

**G**ABBU MAMA'S real name was Govind. He was Pushpa's uncle — the youngest of her mother's three brothers. All the children had called him Gabbu mama ever since Pushpa remembered. Her mother said that it was actually she, when hardly a two-year-old, who had started calling him "Bubboo mama" in her little baby-lisp.

Gabbu mama didn't like his name one bit. He wouldn't easily respond to it. Only when he got exasperated at being repeatedly called Gabbu mama that he'd say, "Yes.....what's it....And I'm Govind, not....*Gabbul*!" But it never worked.

Gabbu mama was in his final year at engineering college and lived in the hostel. He would occasionally spend the weekends at Pushpa's house. There he would busy himself in the thick books that he invariably brought along. He also brought not one but two pairs of thick spectacles. All that reading was obviously doing great harm to his eyes.

Gabbu mama was, in his own way, a great fun. He would teach Pushpa to make little designs with matchsticks and ask her riddles she couldn't understand. He would tell jokes to Minni, Pushpa's little sister, and then laugh at them himself. He would even talk to Pushpa's baby brother in 'googly-googly' language and make large round eyes at him through his spectacles. He generally succeeded in making the little one cry.

One day, Pushpa's parents had to go to a very important dinner. Her mother, therefore, rang up Gabbu mama and asked him to come over and spend the night at their house. "You're a nice boy. Please, you'll baby-sit for me, won't you?" she said.

Gabbu mama arrived late in the evening carrying, as usual, three large books. Pushpa's daddy looked at them wryly. "Are you going to study all of them tonight?" he asked, scornfully.

"Yes!" Gabbu mama replied. "After all, the kids would soon go to bed and I'll have most of the night to myself."

"Gabbu, if you think it is going to be that easy, I can only say, you don't know my kids!" grinned Pushpa's father.

Just, then her mother bustled in. "Don't scare the poor boy! Gabbu, don't worry, the baby's had his feed and is fast asleep. All you've to do is to eat dinner with the girls. I've left everything on the table. And, then, you can ask the girls to go to bed. They won't be any trouble to you."

After a "bye-bye, children, and don't give Gabbu mama any trouble", the parents left.

Gabbu mama took immediate charge. He began, "So, kids, here we are!"

"Where?" asked Pushpa. It made no sense to her. After all, they *were* there!

Gabbu mama was momentarily nonplussed. "Ah...oh...it doesn't matter," he mumbled and then taking Pushpa's and Minni's hands, he said, "Come, let's have dinner."

"I'm not hungry," pouted Minni, "I want to play."

"But, I'm hungry," said Gabbu mama. "And, so, you all are. We're going to have dinner, right now! Just now," he said, firmly.

Minni did not argue further. She and Pushpa meekly sat down at the dinner table. Gabbu mama peered, by turns into all the dishes and uttered various sounds of appreciation! He was obviously very hungry. Muttering something like "that lousy grub at the mess", he put some food on the girls' plates and then heaped a large quantity of everything on his own plate. He got busy consuming the delicacies. It was, therefore, after quite some time that he noticed that Minni was not eating her food.

"Now, what is it...?" he growled, though he did try to look pleasant. "You don't like the food? Shame on you! Children are starving everywhere... And, here, your mummy makes, ah! such delicious grub...."

"What's grub?" asked Pushpa.

"Food, *grub*, simple."

Minni was all the while quiet. Suddenly, she began shaking her dangling legs and squirmed uneasily in her chair. Gabbu mama stopped

eating. "What is it, now, Tell me," he said, commandingly.

Minni said, "I want to go...."

He made a rumbling noise in his throat. "Look, you're not going anywhere until you eat all your grub!"

"But..." said Pushpa. "She means...."

"I want to go....." repeated Minni. There was a warning note in her voice.

Gabbu mama suddenly realised it. He hit his forehead with a resounding 'thwack' and said, "Oh.....and of all times, *now!* Come with me...." He grabbed Minni's hand and rushed her to the bathroom. Pushpa, too, ran after them. She nearly banged into Gabbu mama.

"What's this?" he shouted. "You too? What's this? Some kind of congregation?"

"What's a cong-greg...?" Minni was ever inquisitive.

"Never mind that. Come away you two, and finish your grub! And no more fuss!" Mama sounded so threatening that both the children hurried back to their dinner and finished it quickly.

Gabbu mama appeared relieved. He beamed and smiled at the girls. "Now that dinner is over, it's bed-time for kids."

The statement was received in icy silence.

"We never go to sleep after dinner," said Minni coldly. She gave a 'what-do-you-know' sort of look to Mama.

He gasped. "You...what? You don't ...what?" Mama sounded worried. "Nonsense, everyone goes to bed after dinner...."

"She means.....directly after dinner," explained Pushpa. 'Directly' was the word she'd learnt just the day before.

Mama sounded grumpy. "Then, may I know, whatever do you do *directly* after dinner?"

"We go for a walk," Minni informed.

"Do *you* go for a walk, too?" asked Pushpa.

"I do," he said and then looked at the clock. "But I would not like to take a walk this evening. I have a lot of work to do."

"It's not good for your body," Minni remarked.

"You sound exactly like your father," retorted Gabbu mama. "You chit of a girl teaching me, indeed! Do you know," he pointed a finger at her, "I had come first in the two hundred metres race in my school sports? I know how to keep fit," he concluded angrily. He then turned to tell something to Pushpa, and found her staring at his stomach.

He started drawing his shirt over his slightly protruding stomach, though he didn't succeed.



Pushpa giggled, and Minni joined in uproariously.

Mama scowled and tried to change the subject. "Now, girls, run off, and go to bed. I've got work to do." He settled himself in a big cosy armchair in the drawing room and began to read one of his books. A few pages later, he dozed off. But he soon awoke with a start, to find Pushpa and Minni stumping around the room. They were chanting some weird rhyme and trying to time it by stamping their feet. He got upset at the disturbance and shouted, "What is going on here? Stop the noise!"

They stopped. "We're taking a walk..." Minni explained.

"Why can't you take your walk outside? Has anyone ever heard of people taking a walk in the drawing room?" he laughed derisively.

"Mummy says," chanted Minni, "never to go out alone by ourselves. We'll get kidnapped..."

Gabbu mama was at a loss to answer this one. "Who do you think...will want to kidnap you... You!" he said, laughing. "Kidnap you? That's a joke. Hah!"

Quiet returned to the room. But not for long. There was a thud and a loud wail. "That's the baby!" said Pushpa helpfully.

"Maybe he's fallen down from his cot. Or banged his head. He is always doing that," Minni added.

They all waited for another wail.

"Do you think he has fainted?" asked Minni with some anxiety.

Gabbu mama's eyes all but popped out through his spectacles. "Now *that's* all I need," he grumbled. "Fainted, indeed!"

A series of the eagerly awaited wails began to come from the baby's room. Gabbu mama sprang up and ran, with Pushpa and Minni following him closely.

The baby was sitting up in his cot and banging his head on the raised side of the cot. Gabbu mama picked him up and began massaging his forehead. In fact, he rubbed it so hard that the baby started crying more loudly.

Pushpa shouted "Wait!" and ran off to get the baby's favourite toy — a furry monkey. She wound it up, and the monkey began to clap furiously. Minni too started clapping and dancing. Gabbu mama 'kichik-kooed'. But the baby howled harder. He wouldn't stop. Gabbu mama in despair threw

him back on the cot. "I give up!" he said in a thin shrieking voice.

Minni looked at him intently. "Are you crying, Gabbu mama?"

"I am not! And I'm Govind mama...for the umpteenth time!"

"Gabbu mamal" cried Pushpa over the din. "Gabbu mama, let's take the baby to our room. Maybe he's feeling lonely and is only crying to keep us all here with him."

"Yes...let's go to our room," cried Minni, too.

Gabbu mama picked up the howling red-faced baby and put him on his shoulder. "Whatever you say!" he said meekly.

The baby stopped crying the moment they reached the other room. He began exploring the edges of the bed.

"Tell us a story..." suggested Minni. She snuggled up to Gabbu mama.

"...Tell us one, please!" Pushpa chimed in.

Gabbu mama looked longingly towards the door.

"Once upon a time..." he said thinking hard, "there was a king and a queen ....wait, let me see! No, ...it was like this — there was a prince and a princess ....in different kingdoms..... But there was a king, too. Let me remember, I think he was. Ah, but, then, who was the cruel, unkind king?...I think that's another story.... Wait a minute." Gabbu mama tried hard to recall some story.

Pushpa cried in exasperation, "I didn't understand a word of what you said."

"Wait," Mama said, "I've got it now...Ah! Listen. Once upon a time, there was ....."

There was a loud thud and a familiar wail from the floor.

"Oh!" cried Gabbu mama, throwing up his hands in despair. In doing so, he knocked off his spectacles. "For heaven's sake.....if he goes on dropping himself on his head.....at this rate, what'll become of it?"

"Have you ever fallen on your head?" asked Minni with great interest.

Gabbu mama held his breath. "Look...little girl..." he said, warningly. "I don't know whether you realise what you're talking about. But it could be dangerous...."

Pushpa said, "I don't know what you're talking about, Gabbu mama. You're always saying all kinds of funny things...."



"It doesn't matter . . . ." he grunted. "Now . . . what's this little chap gone and done?" He lifted the weeping baby off the floor. They all began clapping and laughing to cheer up the baby. The baby first looked bewildered, then he decided to join in the general revelry. He began to cheer up. He gurgled and giggled.

Finally, they all sat down on Gabbu mama's stomach and began to heave up and down on it. "Clip clop, . . . Clip clop . . ." they chanted. "Clip clop . . . Clip clop . . . you're our horsie, Gabbu mama. Gabbu mama! What's happened to you?"

"He's fallen asleep," Minni discovered. She seemed disgusted. The baby got a chance to grab at Gabbu mama's nose. Gabbu mama, his sleep undisturbed, opened his mouth to breathe. That helped him make very odd-sounding snoring notes.

Minni giggled. Pushpa sniggered. "Isn't he funny? Look at the way his mouth opens and closes . . ." They watched him in fascination.

"I'm hungry," said Minni suddenly.

"Come," said Pushpa. They went off towards the kitchen. The baby clambered down and crawled towards them. He fell on his face but didn't cry. There was no one to pay any attention to him.

When Pushpa's parents came back from the dinner, they found the whole house in shambles. The frig door was open, some dishes were lying on the carpet, there was food all over the

drawing room. Pushpa and Minni were fast asleep on the sofa with breadcrumbs and jam pasted all over their faces. Gabbu mama's books were lying open: his pen was in two parts; sheets from his notebook were lying here and there. Only the baby was awake. He was sitting on the carpet, painstakingly tearing up the day's newspaper. He had even tried tasting a piece and spat it out, evidently disliking its taste.

Pushpa and Minni woke up on hearing their parents come in. They smiled sleepily. The baby crawled to his mother and gurgled excitedly. They all went into the bedroom.

There lay Gabbu mama spread-eagled across the bed, his mouth open, snoring loudly for all he was worth.

Pushpa's father let out uproariously. "Hey . . . who's baby-sitting whom?"

They all began to laugh. Gabbu mama slept undisturbed.

The next morning, he appeared at the breakfast table, very quiet.

He could never live down the baby-sitting incident. It became one of the jokes that was retold at all family get-togethers!

Gabbu mama, though he tried for years, could never get back his original name. He finally gave up and got reconciled to his nephews and nieces calling him Gabbu-mama.

*Padmini Rao*







## The Boy from Standard III

FATHER Rebello sat in his study, his vast bulk filling the roomy revolving chair. 'Swish, swish' went his pen as it scratched the paper underneath. A clock ticked from the top of the bookshelf. For the rest, the room was very quiet. The windows were shut against the chill mountain air. The curtains were drawn. On the carpet below lay Father's dog, Raja. In the daytime, Raja remained bone-lazy. Even his meals had to be put under his nose or he wouldn't eat. But at night a change came over him. If the wind so much as stirred Father's latch, Raja would give out a deep growl.

The clock had just struck ten when Father signed off the last of the papers. As he put his pen down, he heard a low rumble. "Grrr, grrr...."

"Quiet," said Father, and Raja put his head between his paws.

Silence.

And then Father heard a soft footfall. Then some more. They were coming up the staircase and on to the landing where they stopped. Raja was now barking freely. Father walked to the door and threw it open. "Who is there?" he called. In the dark he could just make out a small form. "Come in," he said and presently the light from the room shone on the face of Norbu, the new Tibetan boy from Standard III.

Norbu shivered slightly as Father Rebello led him into the study. He sat huddled in one corner of a chair, his frightened eyes darting about the room. Father Rebello waited, so that the thudding of the boy's heart had time to ease. He then spoke, "What is it, Norbu? Tell me."

Norbu tried, but the words wouldn't come. He passed his tongue over his lips once, twice, three times, and then at last he found a small voice.

"Father," he said, "I can light some joss-sticks in chapel every evening? Yes? You not mind?"

Father was taken aback. "Of course, Norbu," he replied. "But why?"

"Because to tell God I am here."

Norbu spoke without bitterness, but on Father's ears the words fell harshly. He put an arm around the boy's shoulders. "Why

son, what makes you think God has forgotten you?"

But Norbu would not say anything more, and Father did not want to press, for already the boy's face had gone very white. They had a cup of hot milk together, then Father took a torch, and saw Norbu to his dormitory, half-way down the hill.

Norbu came every day, directly after the evening study, when the rest of the boys went tearing down to the dining-hall. He stole past Father's room and entered the chapel. And five minutes later, Father Rebello could smell the joss-sticks. Norbu seemed content, but Father knew that this was not the end.

The rains had come and gone early that year. The autumn twilight trailed over the land, pink and dotted with stray white clouds. Father Rebello loved the evenings—a time when he could lift his thoughts above the day-to-day running of the school. He never missed his evening walk, often starting from the school on top of the hill, down into the valley, and up again to the little knoll that overlooked a running stream. Here Father would sit and watch the sun sink to rest among the pines.

One day, Father Rebello came later than usual. As he zig-zagged up the path to the top of the knoll, something caught his eye. A blue-clad arm, jutting out from behind a bush. Someone from the school. In uniform. Father Rebello hurried, as he knew the knoll was out of bounds at that hour. "Hello," he said aloud as he marched level with the figure behind the bush. And then he saw it—the startled face of Norbu. In one hand the boy clutched a pencil. In the other, a sheaf of papers. He had been drawing the face of a girl, a Tibetan girl, and her likeness with Norbu was so remarkable that Father caught his breath.

"I never knew you could draw so well," he said. "And who is this girl? Your sister?"

Norbu nodded. Father sat down on the grass beside him, grateful for the tears that shone in the boy's eyes, for they meant that his defences were down and he would be ready to talk. Father Rebello waited. Soon, the boy wiped his face and plunged into his story.

"I seven years old when the Chinese attack Tibet. Even then I have no father no mother. My grandmother she take me and my sister and run to India. We leave our all behind house and clothes and milk-goats. My sister and I small. Can't walk much. Grandmother old. Can't carry. Somehow we drag along with the rest. Hundreds of Tibetans, all running to India."

Norbu took a deep breath. "Some time later, one night grandmother go to sleep and never get up. . . . My sister and I go on with the crowd. Many moons after we find us in a large house. Lots of other Tibetans there too and some people we don't know. They give us small white bowls to eat porridge.

"One day they tell us we go to school. Next morning two buses come. I am put on one with the boys. My sister is put on the other with the girls. They—they take her



away— I not seen her again."

There was a long silence. Then Father spoke gently, "Norbu, you want to look for your sister, don't you?"

Norbu's eyes met his and said, "Yes."

"Then, do you mind if we do it together? I could make enquiries through our Mission. Perhaps your sister is in one of our schools. If not, other Missions will help. . . . of course,

it will take time. . . ."

But Father Rebello never quite finished what he was saying, for, rising like a little whirlwind, Norbu had flung his small arms around his neck. And Father held him tight, while over the mop of brown hair he watched the last little bit of the sun sink peacefully to rest.

*Pratibha Nath*

*(Courtesy : Writers Workshop)*

## The Most Interesting Character I Know

**I**f ever you meet a small boy with mischievous brown eyes and black hair, carefully dressed, don't just take him as one of the thousand boys you meet every day. No, this boy is someone special whom I know, someone who's the pet of our family, someone very naughty, yet lovable. You want to know who he is? He is my kid brother!

He is a mischievous imp. He is shy with strangers, but at home he is a chatter-box. When my father returns from office, he is the first to snatch his bag and take out the contents.

While working sums, he sings songs at the pitch of his voice; it's a wonder that all his sums turn out right.

He is very choosy about what he wears and will never put on anything which is not of his choice.

Being the youngest in our family, he is specially petted by parents. He always manages to get a new pen and a pencil and that too quite often, in spite of the several ones he has and all in excellent condition.

He gets diaries, too, big ones and small ones, and at present he has about five of them. Whereas, I have only one. And as for pens and pencils, I get them only if I can't manage with the ones I am using.

His love for plants cannot be fully described. He will plant different things in pots, and even in condensed milk tins. When reading story-books, he gets totally absorbed in them. Then, not even the talk

of food will make him get up till he has finished the book!

But, while studying, if he hears the sound of an aeroplane, he will stop reading and rush out to watch it.

When he is angry with me, he will pinch me. He is very fond of animals and insects! Once he found a grasshopper that appeared to be dead; actually it was not; it had just hurt its leg. My brother put it on a newspaper and piled grass and leaves around it. Since the poor creature would not eat, he asked father why.

"It's not hungry," replied father.

"Isn't there any medicine that can cure its leg?" he questioned again.

"No, there isn't," replied father.

"Then, why don't you take him to the doctor?" suggested my wise brother.

Father looked up impatiently from the paper he was reading and said, "Now if you say another word, I'll throw that grasshopper of yours outside!" That threat put an end to the talk.

My brother can be very funny at times. Once, when he saw a radio antenna, he kept gazing at it for some time and then asked, "Do the musicians have to climb to the top of it to perform?"

He is a dear little boy, mischievous most of the time and very inquisitive. But I like him, for he is really very funny, and very nice.

*Manisha (11)  
Sri Lanka*

# STUPID SUBBU

IN a village near Tanjore, in south India, there once lived a boy called Subbu. The villagers called him Pithakulli (stupid) Subbu. He could neither read nor write. His mother did not know what to do with him. One day, she heard that a rich landlord was looking for a boy to clean his stables. He kept two grand coaches, drawn by two horses each.

His mother took Subbu to the landlord and pleaded with him, and Subbu got the job. He had to clean the stables every day. Besides food, he was to get two sets of

clothes once a year, and five rupees a month as salary.

One day, while cleaning the stables, Subbu asked another boy who was working with him, "Raman, where do horses come from?"

Raman knew that Subbu was stupid and so he told him that horses came from eggs, just like chicks. Subbu just believed him. He became eager to see a horse's egg. Surely, it would be a very big one!

One evening, he went to the market. He



heard a man shouting: "Eggs for sale! Fresh hen's eggs! Two rupces a dozen."

Subbu went up to him and said, "Sir, have you any horse's eggs?"

The man looked at Subbu and knew at once that he was a fool. He also wanted to have some fun at his expense.

He said, "No, sir, I don't have any, but I can get you one. Come with me."

This man had a brother who sold water melons. He took Subbu to his stall and said, "Dear brother, give this gentleman one of your horse's eggs. A good one that will hatch soon."

Now, the brother was a worse rogue than the other. He knew that it was a plan to cheat Subbu; so he picked up a big yellow melon and said, "Here, take this one, it will hatch in a week. Dig a hole in the ground, line it with straw, place the egg inside, cover it with straw, and sit on it for a week. You'll get a handsome horse."

Subbu was delighted. He had received his first month's salary and had the money with him. He thought, 'Why shouldn't I buy this egg? If it hatches, I will get a horse, and I can sell it and make lots of money and become rich like my master!'

He took the melon and said, "Sir, I've only five rupees. Will that do?"

"The egg actually costs a hundred rupees," said the man, "but since you're my brother's friend, it doesn't matter. I'll be satisfied with whatever you give."

Subbu thought, 'What a good man this horse-egg dealer is!' and he thanked him, while handing over five rupees.

He took the melon home. In a far away corner of the compound, he dug a hole, lined it with straw, placed the melon inside, and after covering it again with straw, sat on it.

Next day Subbu was not seen in the stables.

'Perhaps he is unwell,' thought Raman.

Three days passed. There was no sign of Subbu. On the fourth day, in the morning his mother came to the landlord and said, "My boy hasn't come home for three days. What has happened to him?"

Everyone then started looking for Subbu. Suddenly, one of the servants came running and shouted, "He is in the garden there. I think he is dead!"

They all rushed to the spot. Subbu was lying unconscious in the hole he had dug. The place was stinking.

A servant shook him and said, "Oh, he is alive. His body is warm. But what is this smell from the hole?"

While some servants tried to revive Subbu, others cleaned the place when they found a rotting melon!

Soon Subbu regained consciousness. "Has my horse's egg hatched?" he asked looking anxiously at the faces of all around him.

No one could understand what he was talking about.

"Is he dreaming?" one of them said.

"Or is he mad?" another said.

"No, no," said Subbu, reassuringly.

"There's a horse's egg in the hole. Let me see what has happened to it!" He ran towards the hole.

"It is no egg, you fool. It is a melon, a rotting melon at that!" They all laughed and laughed.

"Oh!" sobbed Subbu. "I spent an entire month's wages on a single melon! Now who will buy me food? I had hoped to sell the horse, get rich, and buy so many things!"

Everyone felt sorry for Subbu. The landlord said, "Don't worry, Subbu, I'll buy you all the things you want. But hereafter, I'll hand over your salary to your mother. You're too stupid to be trusted with money. Don't you know a fool and his money are soon parted?"

*Tara Parameshwaran*

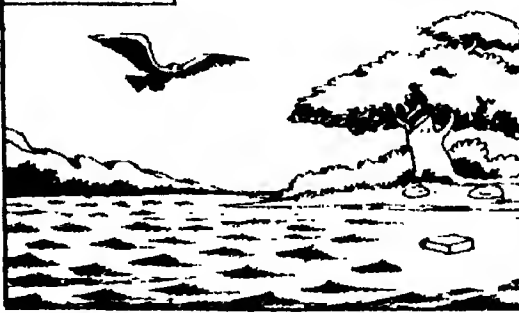
*(Courtesy : Writers Workshop)*

# KAPISH



● ANANT PAI  
● MOHANDAS

PANNA, THE EAGLE, HAS A VERY KEEN EYESIGHT. ONE DAY HE SEES A BOX FLOATING IN THE RIVER.



THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE SORT OF BOX ONE WOULD THROW AWAY. IT MUST HAVE FALLEN IN ACCIDENTALLY.



I'M SURE IT CONTAINS SOMETHING VALUABLE.



AND IT'S HEADING FOR THE WATERFALL. IF IT GOES OVER IT, IT WILL BE DASHED TO PIECES ON THE ROCKS BELOW.



LET ME SEE, IF I CAN PULL IT OUT.

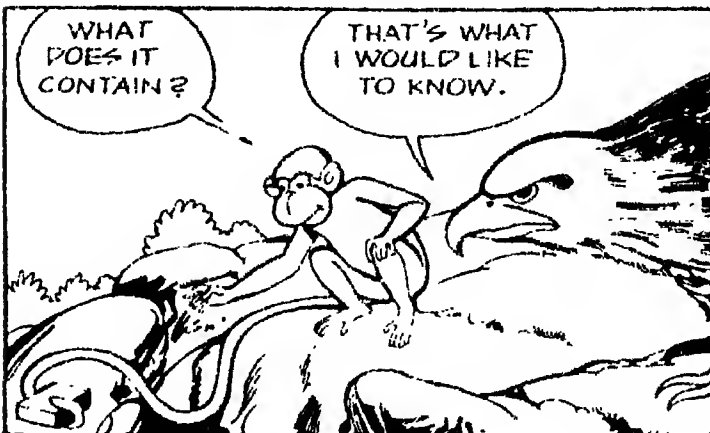


IT'S NO USE. MY CLAWS CAN'T GET A HOLD.

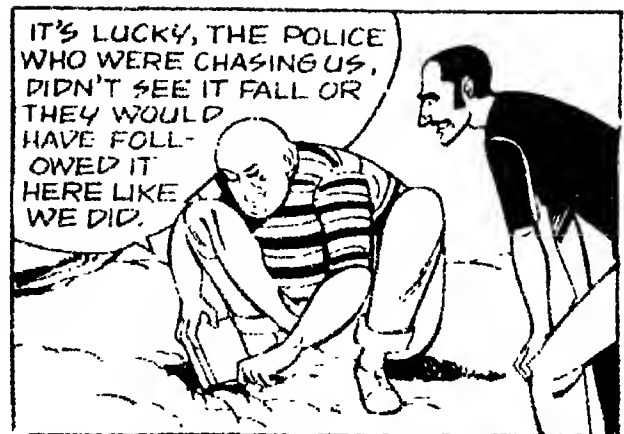


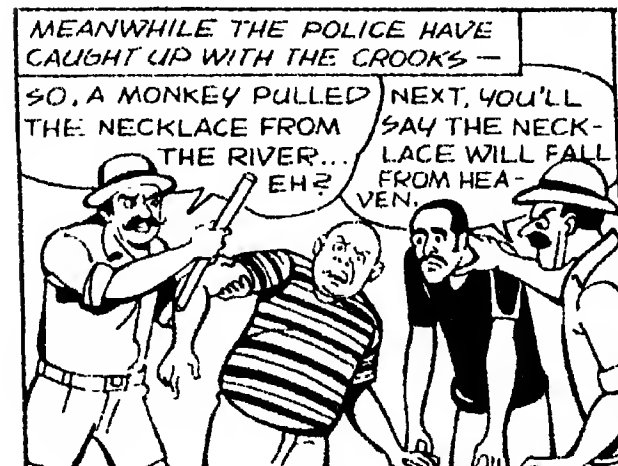
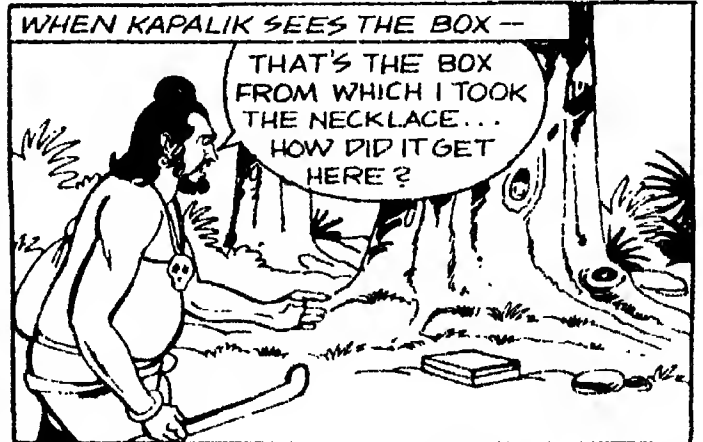
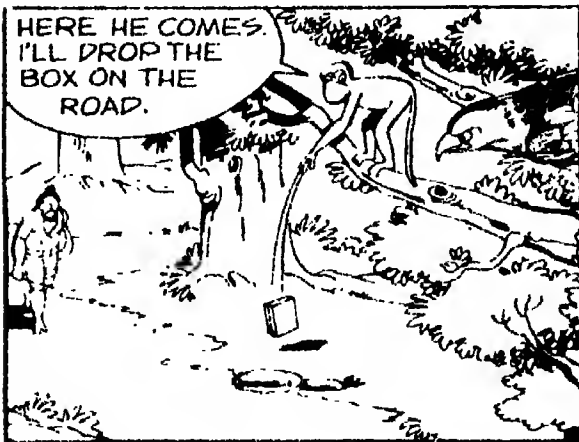
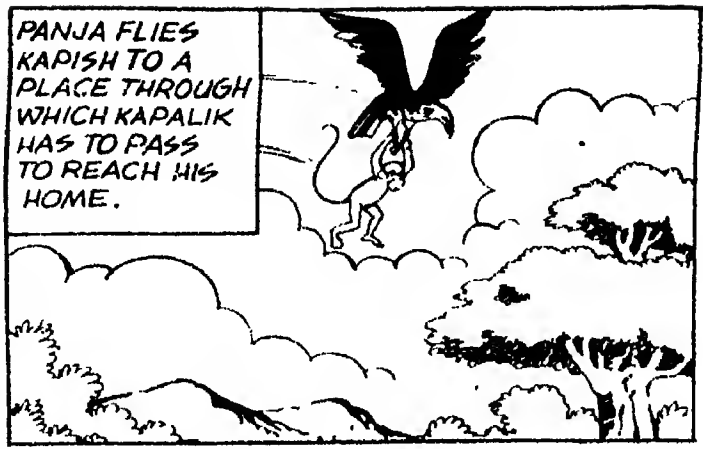
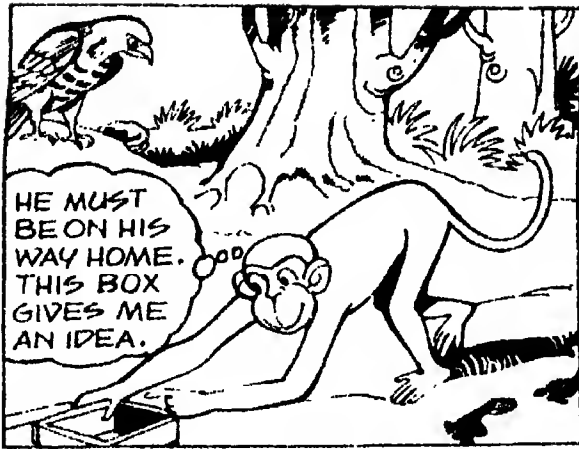
THE BOX RUSHES TOWARDS THE WATERFALL, BUT JUST AS IT IS ABOUT TO GO OVER —











# The Expulsion

*(A Story Based on the Mahabharata)*

“YOU don’t say so!” cried Sudarshana, the young bride, incredulously.

“Of course, dear lady!” said the hermit-boy, shutting the door of the cowshed. “Our Nandini is fabulous! To tell you the truth, I thought everyone knew all about her!”

“Know about whom? Who’re you talking about?” asked Dev, the youngest of the Vasu brothers, joining them.

He had been walking a few steps ahead with his brothers, admiring the plants and trees, abounding in fruits and vegetables, in sage Vasishta’s hermitage. He now turned back to see what had excited his young bride so much.

“This cow! Nandinil!” she cried, pointing to a snow-white cow, standing placidly in a corner. “The hermit says that she has an unlimited supply of milk and that whoever drinks it will live for ten thousand years and in the best of health. It can’t be true, can it?”

“Why, of course, it is true!” said Dev laughing. “As you grow older, you’ll realise that there are many, many other things on the earth more wonderful than even Nandini. Why, sage Vasishta himself is something of a miracle! There isn’t a thing that he can’t do.”

The Vasu brothers — eight of them in all — were the inmates of heaven. They often came down to the earth to visit great sages in their hermitages. They were specially fond of Vasishta, who also liked to have the brothers around. However, this visit was a special one. The brothers had brought along the youngest bride to receive the blessings of Vasishta, who could not be present at the wedding.

“You just wait till you see him,” said Dev enthusiastically.

Sudarshana shrugged her shoulders and looked the other way towards the cowshed. “What a wonderful animal to possess!” she said.

“Yes, indeed,” agreed her husband.

“I wonder what the old sage does with so much

milk,” said Sudarshana, unable to think of any reason. “Surely, he can’t be drinking it all!”

“Good heavens! No! What a mad ideal!” said Dev laughing.

“When he doesn’t need her in the least, why should he keep her at all?” she said petulantly. “She’d be of great use to people like us.”

“You can ask for Nandini when you meet the sage,” said her husband lightly. “He is a great one for giving away things!”

“What! Beg for a cow!” said Sudarshana raising her eyebrows. “You forget that I’m a king’s daughter! I’ve never had to beg for anything yet!”

But what she presently suggested was far more outrageous than begging. As the sage was away and not likely to return for some time, she suggested that they should all go back home. “And let’s take the cow with us,” she added.

“Take Nandini?” cried Dev horrified. “You must be off your head! Surely, you’re not thinking of stealing her!”

“I would hardly call it ‘stealing,’” said Sudarshana, blushing in spite of herself. “Letting her to be of some use would be more like it! She is just being wasted here.”

“Well, I’m *not* going in for theft, and neither are you! Not if I know it!” said Dev firmly.

Sudarshana tried to get round her husband by coaxing. “Aren’t you making a mountain out of a molehill?” she said in her most persuasive tone. “You say that he’s always giving away things. Well, then, he’ll merely think that someone who needs a cow has taken her!”

“Wouldn’t it be better if we asked him first?” said Dev, relenting a bit.

“Of course, we’d have asked him if he had been here,” said Sudarshana, smiling her sweetest. “But as he isn’t, how can we possibly do it? I’m sure he won’t mind! No great man ever minds such a small thing like that!”

“But.....” said Dev, still doubtful. “But.....”

"There are no 'buts' about it," said Sudarshana with gleaming eyes. "Go and tell your brothers while I fetch her from the shed. Luckily there isn't a soul around."

Though the other seven Vasu brothers were totally amazed at the idea of taking away Nandini, Dev managed to win them over. As no one even suspected them of doing anything wrong, it was very easy for the brothers to walk out of the ashram with Nandini.

Sage Vasishtha returned home after a while. He saw at once that Nandini was missing. As he could understand everything, he immediately knew that it was the Vasu brothers who had stolen her. He got very angry. It was not as if he minded the loss of a cow, for as Dev had said, he was an extremely generous person, but he could not tolerate an inmate of heaven stooping so low and indulging in theft.....of all things of a cow!

He summoned the Vasu brothers. "You're not worthy of heaven!" he told them. "Therefore, I expel you from your heavenly abode! Go down to the earth! Be born as human beings. Share all their joys and sorrows for one full lifetime. Then only will you realize the gravity of your sins!"

"But, sire...." began the eldest of the brothers.

"I know what you'll say," said Vasishtha inter-

rupting him. "It was not *your* idea but that of your sister-in-law. Does that lessen *your* sin? All of you are older to her. You needn't have listened to her, nor allowed her to influence you."

"But....." began Dev.

The sage gave him a scathing look. "As *her* husband, it is your duty to tell her what is right. Instead, you opted to do a wrong thing and dragged your brothers into it, too. Shame on you!"

The brothers became very unhappy. It was a great punishment, to be condemned to a lifetime on the earth. "We cannot be born of just any human being," said Dev looking more upset than the others. "We *must* at least have a noble father and mother. What shall we do?"

"The sage has agreed that we may choose our parents," said one of the elder brothers.

"King Pradeep is now reigning in Hastinapur. His son, Prince Shantanu, is a fine young man," said another.

"He could be our father," said the brothers together.

"And Ganga would be an ideal mother for us, if only we can persuade her," said Dev.

"Yes," said the other brothers, "she is so sacred



and pure. We wouldn't mind going down to the earth if we could be born of her."

"Come, brothers, let's all go to her," said Dev. "She is so kind-hearted. I'm sure she will see us through this curse."

The brothers went to the unsuspecting Ganga and prostrated before her. "Mother dear, we've come to ask a favour of you and we won't take a 'no' for an answer," they said in chorus.

"Very well," said Ganga smiling at them. "What is it?"

"Remember that it's a promise," said Dev. "You can't go back on your word! We request you to go down to the earth and marry Prince Shantanu. We eight brothers shall be reborn as your sons."

"Are you joking?" asked Ganga sternly.

Quietly, haltingly, they told her about the curse of sage Vasishta. Ganga listened attentively and realised the depth of their despair. She agreed to help them out, at the proper time.

By and by Shantanu became the king of Hastinapur. He was an excellent ruler and was very much loved by the people. One day, as he was walking alone by the riverside, Ganga appeared before him in the form of a beautiful girl. Shantanu was dumbstruck by her loveliness. She looked like a goddess!

"I neither know nor care *WHO* you are!" cried Shantanu impulsively. "Will you marry me? You were born to be a queen and I shall strive to make you happy with all I have!"

"I'll marry you," said Ganga with a charming smile, "but on one condition."

"What is it?" asked Shantanu anxiously. "Name it and it is yours."

"You must promise never to criticise me or find fault with anything I may do," said Ganga.

"Is that all?" said Shantanu looking relieved. "I wouldn't ever dream of criticising a heavenly beauty like you!"

"I *MUST* have my own way in everything. The slightest protest from you and I shall leave you immediately. Is that agreed upon?" said Ganga.

"Agreed, my queen," said Shantanu, dizzy with happiness, "on my honour as a king."

So Shantanu and Ganga were married. They loved each other deeply and were as happy as any two mortals could be. When a son was born to them, the entire kingdom rejoiced.



One day, the queen went out with the baby and came back alone. "Where's the prince?" asked Shantanu, surprised.

"I threw him into the river," said Ganga casually. "Babies are bothersome."

Shantanu was stunned. 'Has the queen gone mad? Who ever heard of a mother throwing away her own child?' He was about to remonstrate against her cruel act, but checked himself, remembering his promise. He had already lost his son; he could not bear the thought of losing his queen as well.

When another son was born to them, the queen, once again, threw him into the river. The king suffered in silence. Hadn't he promised, on his honour, not to question any action of the queen? How could he then break his word? He merely prayed that his queen might be cured of her madness. She was so sweet and loving in other ways. Why should she behave like this whenever she became a mother? Shantanu wondered.

Thus seven sons were born to them in all, and the queen threw each and every one of them into the river. Shantanu was heartbroken. So, when the eighth son was born, he would not let the child out of his sight for a moment.

One night, he dozed off while sitting by the side of the cradle. He suddenly woke up and saw the queen lifting the baby and walk out softly. The king followed her.

They reached the bank of the river. As soon as Ganga tried to throw the baby into the water, Shantanu caught hold of her hand. "Don't! Please don't do it!" he cried out in agony. "How can you be so cruel and so heartless? You've already killed our seven sons. Let this one live, for god's sake!"

"Here's your son," said the queen, placing him in his arms. "But I can't live with you anymore!"

"Not live with me?" cried the king, bewildered.

"Have you forgotten your promise?" asked the queen. "Didn't I tell you that I would leave you the moment you questioned my action?"

"It was for the sake of my son!" cried Shantanu. "Haven't you had your own way in everything, all these years? Have I ever uttered a word? You cannot leave me for this! It wouldn't be fair!"

"But I've to leave you now. I have no reason to stay any longer!" said Ganga softly.

The sincerity and intensity of Shantanu's grief

pained her. But she had to tell him the truth now. "Listen to me," she said, sitting beside him. "You don't know who I really am or why I married you."

Shantanu said nothing, but continued to look at her with grief-stricken eyes.

Ganga then told him the story of the Vasu brothers, their theft of Nandini, and their expulsion from heaven. She spoke of her promise to help them, which had made her come down to the earth and marry him. "The years with you have been wonderfully happy ones," she added wistfully, "but you must realise that I can't remain here any longer. My true place is in heaven."

Shantanu nodded sorrowfully unable to speak.

"Look after our Devabrata," said Ganga. "He'll be a good son to you and you will be proud of him."

"Yes," said Shantanu, holding him tight.

"You shall find happiness once again," said Ganga and disappeared into the clouds.

Shantanu stood grief-stricken, with baby Devabrata in his arms. Little did he dream how brave and great the child would become in the years to come.

*Swapna Dutta*

## NATURE

Nature is such a thing  
Which makes the bells in your minds ring,  
With all its lovely flowers  
That grow in pretty bowers,  
It's all Nature, lovely Nature  
With all its pretty stature.

Roses which are so red,  
The daisy that nods its head,  
The marigold which is so yellow,  
And the dog-flower like a barking fellow,  
It's all Nature, lovely Nature  
With all its pretty stature.

I like the way the bees hum  
Who to steal the nectar do come,  
The birds that twitter  
And the pools that glitter,  
It's all Nature, lovely Nature  
With all its pretty stature.

*Revathi Swaminarayan (12)  
India*

# WIT *versus* FATE

**L**ORD YAMA was bored. He was tired of his immortal life. He no longer liked his dark and gloomy kingdom. He had no friends and felt lonely. He had only an army of attendants. Although he was the god of death, he wanted to enjoy life, too. He longed for a change.

One day, Yama looked at the earth. He found it bright and sunny. It was springtime, and there were flowers of different colours everywhere. Everyone on the earth seemed to be happy. Then he noticed a young woman. She was strong and beautiful. She was in the midst of a fight with a burly man. She would not give in, and at last he ran away, admitting that he had been defeated.

'She's the girl for me,' Yama said to himself. 'I like her and I wish to have her as my wife.'

He wondered how he could get her. His attendants would only know how to bring her to him dead. Yama found that the only way was for him to go to the earth as a human being and ask the woman to marry him.

So Yama came down to the earth. He was no longer the fearsome god of death but had changed himself into a handsome young man. He found the woman and soon married her.

Yama and his wife, Lata, liked each other. They lived together happily for many years. Then a son was born to them. Lata spent all her time looking after the baby. She did not care so much for her husband any longer. She also began to demand from him various things she or the child wanted. Yama tried his best to give her whatever she asked for, but Lata was not satisfied. She often found fault with him, and began nagging him a lot. She complained that Yama no longer loved her.

As time passed, she nagged him more and more, and things between them got worse and worse. Moreover, Lata was ageing quickly, while Yama remained as young and handsome as he was on the day they were married.

Yama did not have very much money. The household expenses were rising, but very little money

was coming from his land and property. Lata wanted her husband to be very rich so that they could be more comfortable. So, in order to earn extra money, Yama began practising as a doctor. He made various kinds of pills and sold them to people who were ill. Within a short time, he was doing very well in his new job. But there was no change in Lata. Her nagging only increased. She became such a terror to Yama that the moment he heard her voice, he ran away or hid himself.

Yama now felt that life in the dark and dull kingdom of his was better than life on the earth. One day, he disappeared from the earth.

Yama's disappearance did not worry Lata at all. She had enough to do looking after her son,





Yamakumar. She petted him so much that he became a spoilt child. He was lazy and careless and grew up into a useless man.

And then, one day, his mother died. Yamakumar was left all alone. He did not know how to work and earn money. Then he remembered his father's profession. He found all the pills his father had made, and started selling those pills to make a living.

Yamakumar often thought of his father and wondered what had happened to him and where

he had gone away. One night, his father appeared to him in a dream.

"Son," his father said in the dream, "you can continue in your profession as a doctor. You will make a good living. But take my advice: Whenever you go to see a patient, look first towards the head of the bed. If you happen to see me sitting there, it indicates that the patient is sure to die. You need not take the trouble of curing him. Of course, I shall be visible only to you. On the other hand, if you do not see me, you can start your



treatment. The patient will get well soon."

Yamakumar woke up with a start. It was a strange dream, but he believed it. He decided to follow the advice his father gave him in the dream.

Yamakumar continued his practice as a doctor. He made all kinds of pills with all kinds of things. And he treated all kinds of illnesses. But he was careful to look first at the head of the bed. If his father was not sitting there, then he would agree to treat the patient.

People noticed that every sick person treated by Yamakumar soon got well. If he refused to treat a patient, they knew that he couldn't be cured, and he would die.

One day, the king's only daughter fell seriously ill. The royal doctors were unable to cure her. Physicians from all over the country were consulted, but no one could find a remedy. The king feared that his beloved daughter would die. It was then that someone told the king about Yamakumar. The king sent for him.

When Yamakumar went to see the princess, he looked first towards the head of the bed. There sat his father, Yama. Yamakumar sent everyone out of the room. He then said to his father, "Father, this is the greatest chance of my life. If I cure the king's daughter, I will become rich and famous. You must help me by going away. Please leave the patient alone."

"No, my son," said Yama, "ask me for something else. I must take the princess away. She is destined to die. Neither you nor I can now change her fate."

Yamakumar begged his father to go away and thus save the girl's life. But Yama would not agree. Yamakumar again pleaded with him. At last Yama said that he could at the most let her live for three more days. He then disappeared.

Yamakumar was very sad. He told the king that his daughter's illness was very serious, and that he would be able to say definitely if she would get better only after three days. He agreed to stay back and treat the princess as best as he could.

Yamakumar sat with the princess and watched her constantly. Her condition only grew worse. She became very pale and was unable to move. She could not even open her eyes. There was nothing more Yamakumar could do. He waited for his father to come again.

After three days, Yama appeared. He looked at

his son with pity. He was sorry he could not help him.

Yamakumar saw his father. He wondered how he could get back the life of the princess from Yama.

Suddenly, he thought of an idea and he decided to try it out. He looked behind and said, "Mother, why are you so late? Come along, father is here."

Yama went pale. He did not want to face his wife, Lata. He was still frightened of her. He did not wait for another moment. Fate or no fate, whatever happened, he had to escape. He fled away from the earth.

The three fateful days for the princess were over, and she opened her eyes. Yamakumar knew that he had won. His father would not dare to come back to the earth.

The life of the princess was thus saved. Yamakumar gave her some pills and sent word to the king that his beloved daughter would live.

The princess was very soon fully cured. The king and queen were overjoyed. They were so grateful to Yamakumar that they gave their daughter in marriage to him.

*(From "Treasury of Indian Tales" Book I, by Shankar)*

## Written in the Train

Trees, trees far and near,  
As far as eyes can see;  
How strong and confident they appear  
How different from me!

How insecure am I, how afraid,  
How firmly doth they stand;  
With green foliage in every glade,  
Their life so uniformly planned!

Them no fear of death doth haunt,  
No fretting makes them age;  
'Tis a wise serenity they flaunt,  
Tranquil like a reposing sage.

Trees, trees some centuries old,  
As many more to be,  
How dauntless and virile is your mould,  
How different from me!

*Anjali Krishna (14)  
India*



MATKU

and

CHATKU

MATKU the mouse lived in a hole under a tree. The tree stood by the side of a pond. And in the pond, there lived a frog named Chatku.

One day, Chatku hopped close to the tree. He spotted Matku peeping out of his hole. He had never seen him before. So he asked him, "Hi, what's your name?"

"I'm Matku, and what's your's?"

"I'm Chatku," replied the frog.

"Oh, great!" exclaimed Matku. "Our names sound as if we're brothers."

From then on, the two developed a liking for each other and soon became close friends.

One day, Matku came out of his hole quite early in the morning. He found Chatku eating something. Curious to know what his friend was eating, Matku ran to him. He was horrified to see him eating insects and worms. He just could not believe his eyes.

"Chatku, what are you eating?" he asked.

"I am having my breakfast," replied Chatku.

Matku felt funny inside, at the thought of an insect breakfast! He asked, "Eating insects? How do they taste?"

"Very fine, indeed," Chatku licked his lips as he replied. "Would you like to try some?"

"Oh, no. No, thank you," Matku said quickly. "But, tell me, Chatku, how many can you eat at a time?"

Chatku did not reply immediately. He began to think. He thought, why shouldn't he claim to eat a lot? Matku would get impressed. So, he decided to boast and tell a tall tale.

"Well, I can eat a lot. I eat about a hundred insects at one sitting," he told Matku.

Matku was really impressed. His eyes widened. He said, "A hundred, did you say? You can eat a h-u-n-d-r-e-d insects? Are you sure?"

"Very sure," Chatku said coolly.

"No, I can't believe it, unless I can see you eat so many insects!"

"All right," said Chatku. "I'll show you. Eating that many is no problem."

He began to eat and Matku started keeping a count of the number of insects Chatku was licking up. He was eating very

quickly, so Matku had to count quickly, too.

"One, two, five, ten, twenty, thirty," he counted.

Chatku's tummy started to swell.

Matku counted on, "Forty, forty-five, fifty."

Chatku's tummy grew larger, and it ultimately bulged out on all sides. He stopped to take a deep breath, and then went on eating many more.

Matku counted eighty-two. After this, Chatku's eyes seemed to pop out. He could not eat anymore. His tummy was looking like a full-blown balloon. He could neither speak nor move.

Matku saw his friend sit very still; he got worried. "Hey, what's gone wrong with you?" he asked.

Chatku mumbled slowly with great difficulty, "I ... I ... ate a lot. I feel sick. My tummy..." Chatku couldn't speak further.

Realising that his friend was in trouble, Matku ran into his hole and returned with

a small leaf on a stem.

"Chew it, Chatku, and you'll be all right soon," he told his friend.

Chatku picked up the leaf and began to chew slowly. Soon, he blurped and blurped and blurped. He felt much relieved. His eyes opened and he began to breathe properly.

Chatku then left him and returned to the pond.

The next morning Chatku, now feeling fine, hopped close to Matku's hole. He called out, "Morning, Matku, how're you?"

Matku immediately came out, smiling. He asked, "How are you, my friend? Feeling all right? How many insects do you eat at one sitting?"

"Well, not more than thirty, not more than that!" replied Chatku shyly. "No more bragging for me."

"No more, no more?" squeaked Matku.

The two friends laughed heartily and went off to play.

*Manorama Jafa*

# ANIMAL WORLD



MONKEY:

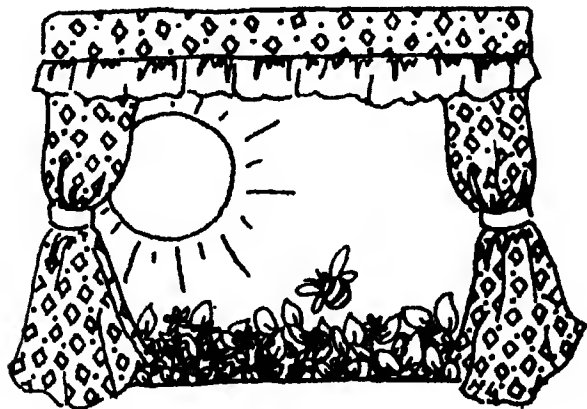


# A ROOM TO YOURSELF!

*"First we shape our dwellings  
Afterwards our dwellings shape us."*

**Y**OU'VE just had your birthday. You've turned ten, and you feel BIG—grown up! Naturally, you like to have a place of your own. And you **do** get a whole room to yourself—perhaps it comes as a birthday present from your loving parents.

Right! Now, you would like to arrange your room the way you want it. Let's go about it and, while doing so, find out if our ideas are similar to Mummy's. It's not going to be that simple or easy, let me tell



you. Your's will be a 'multi-purpose' room: you'll be studying there, playing, and sleeping. All these activities (Is sleeping also an activity? you may ask. Yes, it is, in a way—at least it makes you active after you get up!) have to be considered while selecting a room and later arranging it.

Suppose, Mummy lets you choose a room for yourself. She would like to have you next to her own room—to have you just an eye-shot away, and within her hearing. She would, thus, ensure that you are safe.

You find that the room has good 'ventilation' and it's very airy. It has more than one window, or if there is only one, it is perhaps

large enough to let in a lot of sun into the room. That'll keep you healthy and smiling. Doesn't the window open out into the garden? You can then have a good view of the flowers there.

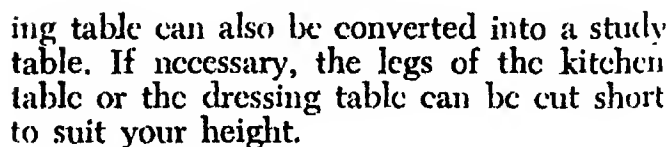
Is the room too big for you? You feel as if you have put on a large-sized adult dress! Or is it too small and you feel crammed and cribbed?

Before you move in your things, don't you want to give the room a new coat of paint, of the colour you like most? Colours do some simple tricks! Light colours make things appear big; and if you see them against dark colours, they will look smaller than what they actually are! Colours like red, orange and yellow—they are known as 'sun' colours—give out warmth. 'Earth' and 'water' colours—blue, green and white—will make you feel cool.

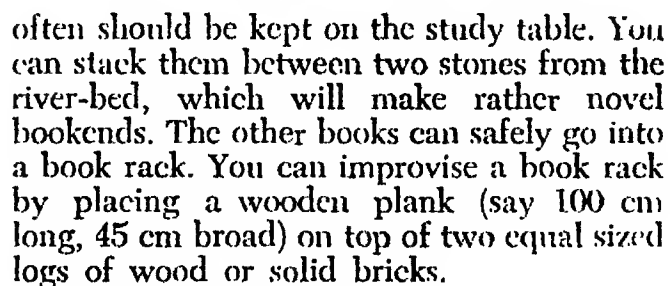
It's not enough that you pick up one or two colours that you like. It will be better to have a 'colour scheme'. Let me explain: Suppose your favourite flower is pansy. It has three leaves. One is yellow, another mauve, and the third a mixture of both, with a touch of green. You can easily adopt the same colours for your room. The walls can be yellow; you can have a green bedcover; and mauve can be used for the curtains. Any colour that covers a large area will look intense, like the yellow for the walls. You can make it mild or light. If you keep the colour scheme to two or three colours, it will be easier to handle.

Now your furniture. Remember that big chair you were once using? Your feet used to dangle. And you didn't feel comfortable at all. The height of your chair and table, therefore, must suit your own height. Ready-made furniture can solve this problem,

Like the baby's feeding chair lying unused. Cut it just above the step and it makes a comfortable chair for you. The lower portion will give you a nice little teapoy, or a carrom table, or chess table. If the old kitchen-table is cut into half, it will give you two smaller tables. The cut-out part can be easily attached to the wall. Likewise, an old dress-



JUNE 1978



Don't you want a play corner? Perhaps you generally go out to play. If so, your ball, bats, and rackets will need a storage place. But you also have friends who drop in to have a game of chess, carrom, or snakes-and-ladders. You must have enough seats for them. A visit to the attic may prove fruitful. You can retrieve a cot, and a little



carpentry will yield a nice, cosy settee. An old cabin trunk or packing cases can be converted into a 'divan' with some padding under a striped rug. A carrom table that had gone into disuse will become a useful table if screwed on to a wooden frame with four legs. Attach sacks to the four corner pockets and you can keep knick-knacks in them.

Lastly, where will you keep your cot? You would like to look at the stars and the moon while you try to get sleep. Put it next to the window, but it should not be in the direction of draught. A bed lamp will

be useful if you are in the habit of getting up in the middle of the night or when you wake up after a bad dream. It will also attract the attention of your parents in the next room.

Your room is ready! You are glad that it has come out almost as you had wanted, and your parents are happy that they didn't have to spend on any new items. How about your little brother? Does he also ask for a room of his own?

*Toshi Goswami*

## Can Sunday Change into Monday?

ONE summer morning I got up late. In fact, the sun's rays coming through the bedroom window woke me up. I looked at my watch. 'My god, it's seven!' I jumped up to get ready for school.

It was then that I realised in what a mess my room was. Shelves had been ransacked, the small cupboard was upside down. 'What has happened?' For a moment I was alarmed, then I realised, 'Oh, I had that party last night.'

I picked up my towel and looked for the school uniform. It wasn't in the place where Mummy usually keeps it. 'Well, I'll shout for it after taking my bath,' I thought.

I heard the tinkle of a cycle bell and looked out from the bathroom window. I saw my younger brother, Venkat, riding his cycle and going down the back lane. I thought, 'How late I am today. He has already taken his breakfast and is going to school.' But, then it struck me that he was not wearing his uniform. 'Surely, he has forgotten it and will be fined. Good for him. He is so forgetful!' I smiled at the thought, but felt sorry for him, too.

After a quick bath, when I raced down to the dining table, I found my breakfast ready.

I hurriedly gulped down the milk. When Mummy came in from the kitchen she remarked in a surprised tone, 'Good, you've taken your bath, Shobha. Your uncle and aunty are coming over just now and will stay for lunch. Tell Venkat, too, to get ready quickly.'

Puzzled, I asked her, 'But, how can they come? Uncle never misses his office. And, what about Papa, isn't he going to his office? And how do you expect me to stay on? I can't miss my school, particularly today. I have my bio-test.'

Mother, all the while I was protesting, was listening with a smile. As I stopped, she laughed and said, 'Everyone's normal and is doing exactly what one should do on a Sunday. It's you who's wanting to do on a Sunday what's to be done on Monday, which is tomorrow. Go on, and wash your face again. Are you still sleeping?' she asked me.

With a peevish smile, I got up to clean up the mess in my room, while Venkat rushed in imitating at the top of his voice the hoot of a steamer.

*P. Shobha (12)  
India*



# HURRY UP

# MANGOES!

“**C**HINTU! I don't like holidays.”

Ten year old Meetha shouted from his bedroom window. In response, Chintu's chubby face peeped out from the window of his house, which was next to Meetha's.

“What are you yelling about,” asked Chintu, rubbing his eyes heavy with sleep.

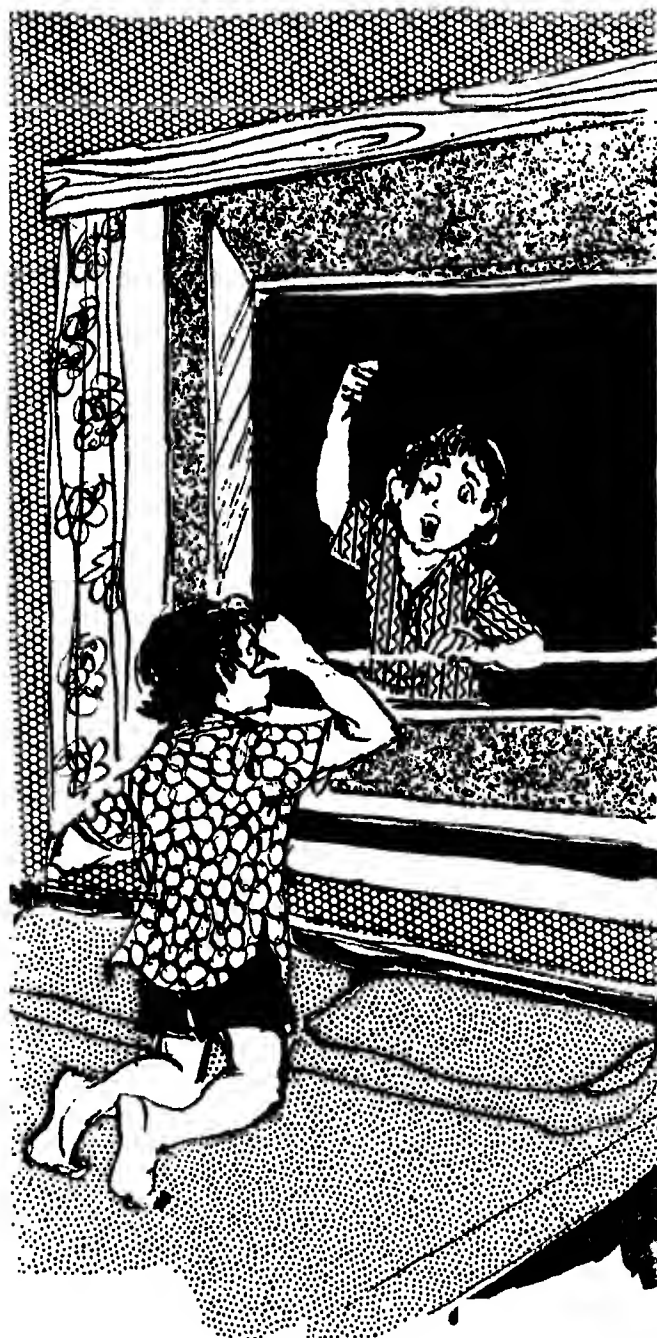
“I am bored. Nothing to do,” Meetha yelled back. Then he asked Chintu, “What were you doing?”

“Sleeping. I was, at least till you let out that war cry of yours. Can't you let me sleep late even during the holidays?” Chintu complained.

Meetha ignored Chintu's protest and asked, “Tell me, are some mangoes ready on that tree at the back of your house?”

“You want to know about mangoes now. You have woken me up for that?” Chintu was annoyed. “They won't be ready for at least one more month. And you know that. Go back to sleep.”

“You don't know anything. The mangoes can be ready in three days,” said Meetha. “Bring me a few. I will keep them in a bag full of straw. After some days you can come and eat nice and sweet mangoes.” Meetha smacked his lips and described with his hands how he would eat the mangoes.



“If I give you the mangoes, you will probably finish them even before they are ready,” said Chintu.

“No, no!” said Meetha. “And I promise you. I will give you nearly half of them.”

“Why nearly half and not exactly half?” asked Chintu.

“Because,” said Meetha, “I will take some as my fee for getting them ready quickly.”

“But, a hen never takes any fee for getting the eggs ready,” pointed out Chintu.

“What!” yelled Meetha. “You called me a hen. You think I am a hen?”



"Well! Look, I am only, as our teacher says, giving an example," replied Chintu.

"You are a teacher and I am a hen?" Meetha by now was excited, and stood up on the stool. He threatened Chintu, "I will not help you in getting the mangoes ready. And you know what will happen. Birds will eat them up."

"Birds?" Chintu was now worried. "What birds would eat sour mangoes?"

"Parrots, Chintu. And squirrels would also climb up the tree to finish off whatever is left by the birds."

"So what do we do?" Chintu was very upset.

"Both of us get ready quickly. Then we go and pluck the mangoes, and bring them to

my room..." suggested Meetha.

"And why not to my room?" Chintu enquired.

"Because," said Meetha. "You don't know anything about the mangoes. I have learnt how to ripen them from the gardener."

"Then he can teach me too," said Chintu.

"You will never learn," Meetha answered very happily.

"Why! If I can learn to do sums, why can't I learn to look after mangoes?" Chintu protested.

"Because, mangoes are soft and sums are hard. If you do sums wrong, they don't get spoilt. They can be re-done. But, if a mango gets bad, it cannot be eaten. Imagine, Chintu, losing a full mango."

"Yeah, you are right! Can't lose a full mango," agreed Chintu.

But then he remembered suddenly. "I might lose not one but all the mangoes if you take them to your room, Meetha."

While the two friends were having the argument, the gardener, an oldish man, arrived. He heard the two boys arguing.

"What are you two boys fighting over?" he asked.

Meetha and Chintu both started explaining together. It was after a lot of difficulty that the gardener could understand their problem.

"So Meetha knows how to ripen the mangoes quickly. He has learnt it from me. And Chintu, you are worried that he will eat all of them. Aren't you?" the gardener asked.

Chintu nodded, "Yes, yes! You know how fond Meetha is of mangoes. He can't help it you know?"

"So what I suggest is, you two get ready quickly and go and collect some mangoes. Bring them to me. I shall ripen them and give half and half to both of you. Is that all right?" the gardener asked.

"Absolutely," shouted the two boys.

"But, I shall take out some as my fee," the gardener pointed out smiling.

"You can take..." Meetha hesitated. He was unable to decide how many.

"But hens don't charge any fee for eggs," Chintu gave his favourite example.

"Then I suggest you give the mangoes to your hens," chuckled the gardener.

Meetha had a brainwave. He shouted, "Chintu, let's go and collect the mangoes and eat them right now. What if they are sour? We can eat the sweet ones next month."

"Well, I think we will do that," yelled back Chintu, all ready to run to the mango tree.

"Just a minute, boys," said the gardener. "I have already collected all the mangoes and put them under straw."

"Oh, no, have you already?" said a disappointed Chintu.

Meetha wailed, "Then what will we do?"

But, the next moment he brightened up. "Chintu, what we will do now is to watch the gardener ripen the mangoes. As they get ready, we will share them out. This way we will learn how to get them ready and be able to eat them too. Agreed?" he asked Chintu. Chintu agreed immediately.

"And, Chintu, you bring your hens too. They can also learn and help you ripen the mangoes free of cost the next year," laughed the gardener.

"Yes, and then we won't have to pay any fee either," yelled both Chintu and Meetha happily.

Vijay Dutt

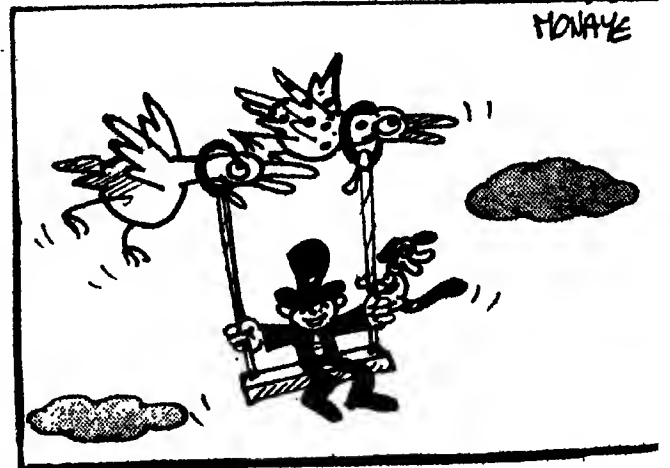
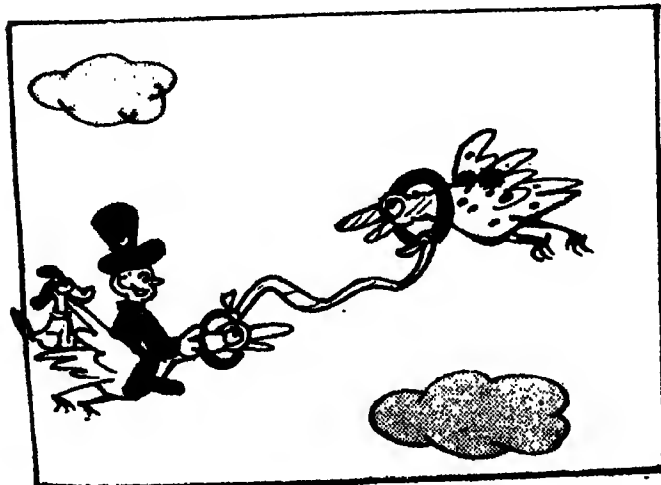
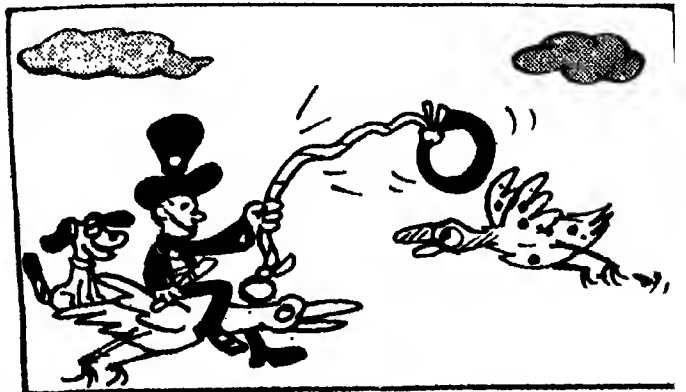
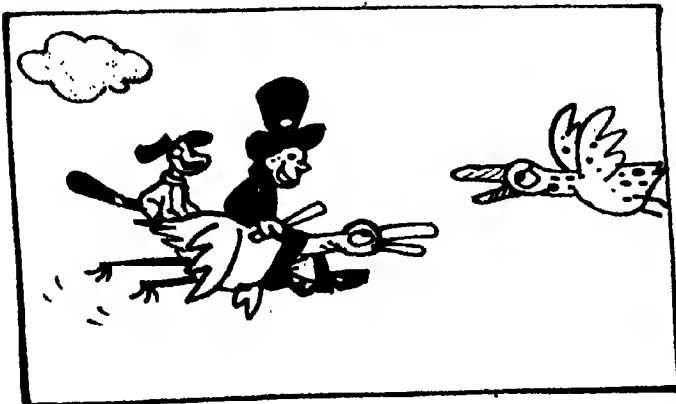
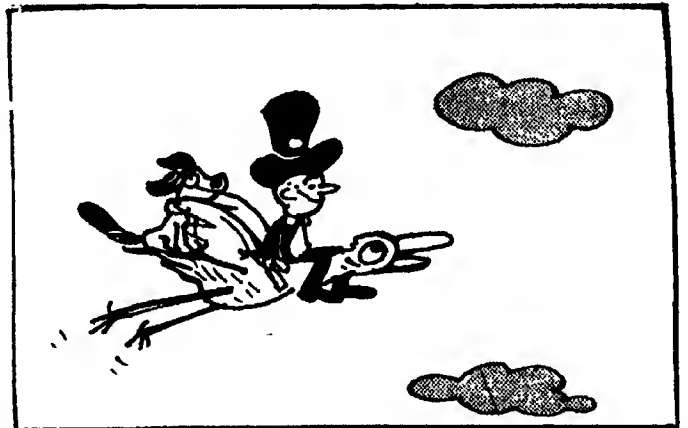
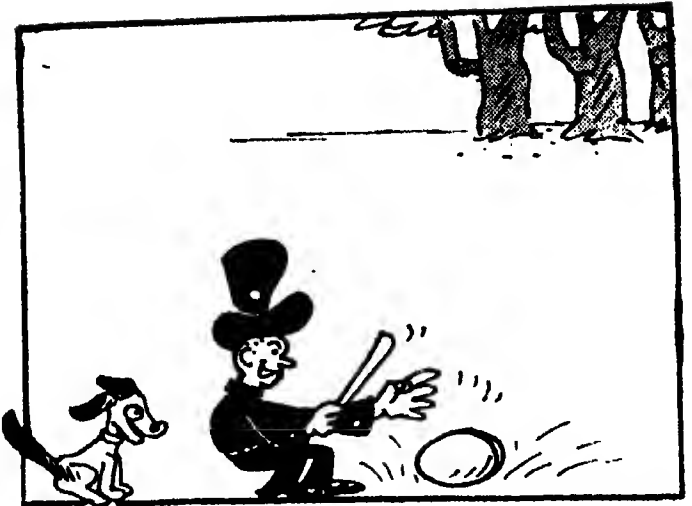
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# THE MAGICIAN



BY MONAYE



MDIAYE

# Second Sight or Telepathy?

THE next day at his residence, in the calm, pleasant outskirts of Calcutta, I was discussing with Roy the Mystic the performance of the street magician we had witnessed together. (See *Children's World*, May 1978).

He began to explain: "The feat belongs to the category of Mental Magic, one of those into which Robert Houdin divided his art of mystification. Houdin tells us in his autobiography that his two sons were once playing a game devised by themselves. The elder brother's eyes were blindfolded and, in that condition, he was trying to guess different objects in the room touched by the younger brother. This game suggested to Houdin the idea of *Second Sight*."

"And one day in 1846, printed handbills publicised Houdin's show:

"In this programme, M. Robert Houdin's son, who is gifted with a marvellous *Second Sight*, after his eyes have been securely blindfolded with a thick bandage, will describe every object presented to him by the audience."

"Houdin never explained the secret of this excellent trick in detail, but indicated in his autobiography that a clever combination of questions gave the clue to the assistant on the stage, whose *first sight* remained closed by the thick blindfold."

"This trick was one of the highlights of my own programme," said Roy the Mystic, "but considering the trick from another point of view, I called it *TELEPATHY* or Thought-transference. Telepathy means communicating thought from one mind to another without the help of any of the five senses. And, apparently, I did exactly that in transferring my thought on the objects to the mind of my blindfolded assistant on the stage."

"Stage magicians nowadays do not include this trick in their programme," I remarked.

"That is because a successful performance of this trick demands perfect memorizing, by both the magician and his assistant, of a very elaborate code, which modern magic artists would find too strenuous and not worth their while," said Roy the Mystic. "Before presenting it in my programme, I had carefully prepared a very lengthy and elaborate code, consisting of questions and re-

marks, covering a very wide range of objects so that, no matter what a spectator put in my hand during the show, I could convey a detailed description of it to my blindfolded assistant on the stage with the help of that code — the name of the object, size, shape, colour, smell, quality, peculiarity (if any), etc. It took several months for us both to memorize the long code perfectly. Of course, I framed the questions and remarks in such a manner that they never aroused any suspicion in the minds of the audience that through them I was supplying information to my assistant.

"The preparation was long and very strenuous," added the veteran magician, "but the reward was great. A star item in my show, it created sensation and passed for genuine telepathy everywhere. Many learned people believed that I was not an ordinary sleight-of-hand magician, but had occult powers like the 'Yogis' and 'Rishis' of old."

The old master of magic smiled. "A scientist of the calibre of Sir Oliver Lodge was once so taken in by a fake medium's conjuring trick that he certified it as a genuine spiritualistic feat. Houdin's escapes from nailed packing cases, locked mail bags, and other restraints were all based on clever trickery, but Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the world-famous creator of Sherlock Holmes and writer on spiritualism, believed that Houdin was really a spiritualist performing his miraculous feats with the aid of supernatural spirits!

"Now, do you believe that I can neither read other people's thoughts nor transfer my own thoughts into another mind?"

"Yes, I do," I replied meekly.

"But if you care to act as my assistant," the magician said, "we together can present such a convincing experiment over the phone that some educated, respected, and reliable persons will feel that there is genuine telepathy, and that your thought has telepathically travelled and correctly reached my mind many miles away."

I received his instructions, which were ridiculously simple and easy to master, and the actual experiment followed a few days later.

It was a Sunday. I was at the residence of my brother-in-law, Mr Chowdhuri. He was an officer in a leading engineering firm and his wife, my

cousin, a professor in a Calcutta college. I was one of the guests invited to lunch. After lunch, a game of cards began, and I was one of the on-lookers. At the end of a game, I turned to the Chowdhuris (my cousin and her husband), and said, "I can prove, right here and now, that Telepathy is possible."

I told the gathering to select a card, or any card, from the pack. After much deliberation and many changes of mind, one card was finally, and *freely selected, without any possibility of my forcing their choice.* I took the chosen card from them and said: "Most of you here already know Roy the Mystic. You met him in my place and saw his aged hands perform miracles with cards. At this moment, he is resting in his residence 15 miles from here. While I concentrate my thoughts on the card in my hand, which *you* have freely chosen, will someone ask Roy the Mystic over the phone to try read my thought by telepathy and tell you the name of the chosen card on which I am concentrating my thought....I shall dial his number, but one of you will have to do the talking."

I lifted the receiver, held the earphone to my left ear, and dialled with the right hand. "Hello!" I shouted into the mouthpiece, shaking my head indicating, 'No response yet', and waited. I had to cry "Hello" again before I gave the phone over to my brother-in-law, saying, "Now you talk. Explain the situation and ask him what card I have focussed my thought upon."

Mr. Chowdhuri talked to the magician over the phone, and then told me: "He says he hasn't yet been able to catch your thought-wave, and asks you to concentrate more."

I concentrated more deeply. A few seconds later, my brother-in-law, apparently flabbergasted, turned to us all and said: "*He has correctly named the card: Seven of Spades!*" To confirm his statement, he let some others also hear the name of the card in Roy the Mystic's own voice over the phone.

Almost everybody, including Mr. Chowdhuri, at once bade good-bye to all skepticism and became firm believers in Telepathy. They all felt that this was a clear, convincing case of genuine telepathy, and *there could be no other explanation.*

But there could be! And here is the very simple explanation of this very wonderful trick, one of the finest in mental magic. As soon as Roy the Mystic lifted the receiver at the other end, I cleared my throat a little, as pre-arranged with him,

so that he knew it was I who was ringing up. He at once started slowly naming the suits of cards: CLUBS.....HEARTS.....SPADES. As soon as he said SPADES (which *only I heard, and nobody else*), I said "Hello!" pretending (to those near me) that there was yet no response from the other end. My first 'Hello' told him that the card was Spades. At once he started saying ONE.....TWO.....THREE....FOUR, and so on. When he said SEVEN, I said 'Hello'. So he learnt that the value of the card was SEVEN. Thus, thanks to my two Hellos (which, being natural, none suspected as conveying information), Roy the Mystic knew that the card was SEVEN OF SPADES.

Ajit Krishna Basu

## IMAGINATION

If earth was up,  
And skies below,  
If plains were high,  
And mountains low,  
What a funny world this would be!

If roots were up  
And trees were down,  
And everything turned upside down,  
And in water deep no one would drown,  
What a funny world this would be!

If animals would go to school,  
And in this world animals would rule,  
If animals were civilized,  
And everything they would organize,  
What a funny world this would be!

But I like this world as it should be,  
For if animals would go to school  
And in this world animals would rule,  
What would become of me?

Poonam Krishnan (12)  
India



# RAMU IN ORBIT

## THE STORY SO FAR

It was the summer of 2077. The sylvan meadows of Ootacamund, in Tamilnadu, suddenly echoed an alarm. "Bleep! Bleep!" The radio telescope there had picked up some strange signals. The control room soon hummed with people. They found the signals unique. Other tracking stations in India and elsewhere were alerted. The giant telescope at Kavalur spotted something strange in the skies. It was seen orbiting Mars. But two days later, it just disappeared! Four days later Kavalur spotted a star in broad daylight. Or was it a spaceship? Adding to the suspense was some intriguing radio noise. Was the alien spacecraft poised for an attack? It was concluded that the unusual signals meant a message for man, and perhaps the satellite was waiting for an answer.

An Indian satellite, 'Rohini', flashed a series of messages declaring friendship and offering any help that might be required. The Rohini Mission Control reported a queer behaviour of the oscillograph. The computer message urged a "meeting" 1,410,000 km away from the earth! An urgent conference in Sriharikota decided on a rendezvous, with the aid of a reusable space shuttle. Preparations were launched for sending a team to meet the alien spacecraft, now named 'Trivikrama'. The international team of 20 scientists, including four women, on board 'Cauvery' was led by Captain Venkatesh. Cosmonaut Ramu, his wife Anju, also a space-woman, and navigator Padma made up the other Indian members.

While in 'parking orbit', Cauvery received the message that 'Trivikrama' had moved away without any warning. Was the adventure in space to be called off? wondered scientists on earth. While it was being debated, on the third day, Cauvery got the warning of a solar flare. The crew and the Mission Control then realized why the alien craft had moved away—to avoid being caught in the solar flare—a clear indication of superior intelligence! The spotting of the retro-fire of Trivikrama brought in some hope of a rendezvous.

On approaching the alien spacecraft, Cauvery noticed what a huge complex it was—resembling a spiral galaxy. However, there was no apparent docking device. Nobody could also guess whether there was any living being inside.

The Mission Control gave the go-ahead for a spacewalk and possible entry into Trivikrama. Cosmonauts Ramu and Anju got ready, and soon the space couple were actually standing on the hull of Trivikrama! They saw an array of sophisticated instrument panels and gauges inside. Though there was no visible response from Trivikrama, Cauvery noticed that whenever there was a change of display or messages, there were synchronous broadcasts from the alien spacecraft. Were the messages being transmitted to another mastercraft?

Venkatesh dramatically beamed infrared rays on the alien spacecraft. It was as if a million headlamps had been suddenly trained on a dark night. Cauvery, understandably, received a message from 'Trivikrama'. 'They' wanted to know more about the human brain! It became almost certain that the spacecraft was only echoing the orders from elsewhere. In a strange behaviour, Trivikrama ejected what looked like a slab. It stayed in space for some time before it began going down towards the earth, but continued to orbit along with Trivikrama.

A flutter was caused by the sudden presence of another intruder in space — this time a second spacecraft from the earth. And it was chasing the slab! It even recovered it from space. Cauvery received orders: "Abandon Mission!" Had the celestial aliens turned their wrath on the earthly 'intruders'?

There was an eerie silence for sometime, which was broken only by a shrill cry from Anju, "Ramu! Ramu!" Cauvery had de-orbited before the cosmonaut could re-enter the spacecraft, and he had been left behind! "Can't he be saved?" Anju asked tearfully.

Meanwhile, Ramu remained calm. He hid himself against the hull of Trivikrama and soon came upon a switch which opened itself with a spark. Inside the alien world, Ramu felt strangely at home! There were rows and rows of computers, but what absorbed him most was a detailed map etched on a panel. It was the galaxy, Andromeda, nearest to the earth. There were evidences of adaptation from man's knowledge of the solar system. The remarkable identity of data was awe-inspiring.

Ramu moved about cautiously. As soon as he stepped into a huge dome, he was surrounded by a cocoon of rays. He was pinned to the spot, so to say, and no movement was possible.



He felt tired and went to sleep while leaning against a computer desk. When he woke up, the TV panels in front of him were showing strange pictures looking like electro-encephalograph curves.

Meanwhile, Captain Venkatesh decided against a meeting with the other spacecraft from the earth which he had named 'Garuda'. He could listen to astronaut Wood boasting about their space achievement in securing the slab from the alien craft. For two days he and his crew tried to cut open the slab, without success. An infra-red lamp revealed a queer arrangement of crystal-like formations on the slab. Wood radioed photos of these formations. Only the Canadian Eskimos were able to de-

cipher them and their conclusion was startling. The alien race was offering a formula to double the human lifespan! Was Trivikrama trying to barter the slab and the formula for the human biological specimen it had earlier demanded? Was Ramu being kept as a hostage?

Mission Control gave orders for 'Operation Rescue' and return of the slab. Capt Wood, however, declared his intention not to give up the prized possession. Suddenly, contrary to all instructions, the three astronauts aboard Garuda fell asleep at the same time. The crew of Cauvery as well as the scientists on the earth could only speculate over this strange interlude.

Now read on...

## 8. RAMU ESCAPES

THE Master Watch Control panel in Sriharikota picked up strange signals. There was no doubt, they were from the alien spacecraft. They relayed formula-like numbers for full two hours. They were fed to computers, which decoded an important message from Trivikrama. It said that the slab "they" sent should be returned to Trivikrama. Otherwise, "they" would destroy all the satellites that orbited the earth and the moon! The demand for the slab was inexplicable. After all, did the alien spacecraft know its "capture" by an earth team?

As if to emphasise that it was no idle threat, Trivikrama's rays silenced one of the largest satellites which had been employed for weather observation. There was immediate dislocation in international air and sea traffic. The weathermen all over the globe were put to great difficulties. Their forecasts went haywire. Their predictions flopped. And several other craft seemed to be in imminent danger.

Shuttle teams immediately took off to repair the defunct spacecraft. But they were repelled by strong ultra-violet rays. There seemed to be something wrong with the atmosphere itself!

Aboard Trivikrama, cosmonaut Ramu became restless. The awesome loneliness began to tell on his nerves. He began talking to himself. Two minutes later, everything that he uttered was repeated by a loud-speaker! Perhaps even his thought patterns were being registered!

Suddenly, he saw some strange signals. The computer panels in front of him started twinkling in an unusual pattern. His own sensors, hidden inside his spacesuit, were also showing something interesting. The signals clearly indicated a violent solar flare fast approaching them. The apparent synchronous signals from his own sensors and those in the alien craft were more than mere coincidence.

Ramu stood fascinated. He eagerly waited to see how the huge spacecraft's defence mechanism would react to the warning. Suddenly, he felt a jerk in an otherwise motionless spacecraft. Was it moving? Was it trying to get away, as it did before, to a higher plane of orbit till the flare passed off? While he got lost in his calculations, he noticed that he could easily move about, and that the cocoon of rays around him had vanished. In exercising his new-found freedom, he swung his arms a full 360 degrees and, in the process, stumbled on a switch. Immediately, one set of computers stopped working. A complicated chain reaction followed. There was hardly any movement on the control panels, which were bustling with activity only a minute before.

And the jerks increased. He felt he was standing on the brink of a hill, shaken by an earthquake. Suddenly, the control panel showed the earth and a spacecraft. The spacecraft grew bigger and bigger on the TV screen on the control panel and at last he could even recognise it. It was Cauvery,

no doubt about it. It was fast approaching for a rendezvous.

He was glad to see it again, even if his colleagues could not see him. His only hope was that Trivikrama should stay within the 'look angle' of Cauvery. Perhaps some beings, far more intelligent than men, he thought, would emerge and evaluate him. Some dialogue, which he could not hear or see, must have taken place between Trivikrama and his own craft. The second rendezvous would not be a chance coincidence.

The freedom from the rays which surrounded him was the result of the confusion in the controls caused by his inadvertent meddling with the switches. Nonetheless, the door was open, literally, for him to escape. For a moment he thought whether it would do him any good to get out into the void. Suppose he missed the earthly craft?

But events in space happen in a matter of seconds. Cauvery was only a few metres away and he could feel nothing to hold him back. He set his control gear and made a dash for freedom.

Capt. Venkatesh took no chances. He hooked him with a rope and pulled him inside. It was the most unexpected reunion in the history of space! The happiest person was Anju, who had at one time given up all hopes of a reunion.

An urgent message awaited Venkatesh, as soon as he returned to the control panel. Mission Control ordered him to transfer the cargo of biological specimen without any delay. The messages from Trivikrama were getting jumbled and they were unable to decide the next step.

Navigator Padma gave a common alert to everyone. 'Trivikrama is likely to move away!' It had made one complete round in three minutes. Venkatesh ordered immediate transfer of the biological cargo, which had just then been delivered by a space shuttle from the earth. But all his assumptions proved wrong. Trivikrama was still rotating. The speed of rotation only increased from second to second. Was it a preliminary step to take off on another mysterious journey?

The only way to transfer the cargo was to throw a rope out in the hope that it would

get hooked somewhere. Cauvery waited for a portion of the alien craft, with its protruding pole-like structures, to pass by, and then lobbed the rope with the cargo at the right moment. The plan worked and the cargo got attached to Trivikrama, which was by then gyrating faster and faster.

Nothing could be predicted. It was not known whether the craft would descend or ascend. There was also the nagging fear that it might use the 'death' rays to knock out more of the application satellites, as the slab as demanded by Trivikrama was yet to be returned to the alien craft. All hopes for a happy ending now lay on Garuda. In the meantime Trivikrama's computers had put out a warning signal, setting a time limit for the return of the slab.

Padma detected a fast approaching craft almost on a collision course. Venkatesh broadcast a message alerting it to keep off. It was by then only a few minutes away, and a signal said it was Capt. Wood, coming up to get rid of the slab. He asked whether a docking could be attempted with Cauvery and whether it would be in a position to effect the transfer to the alien craft.

Capt. Venkatesh was a little relieved immediately, though he began worrying, because Trivikrama had set a time limit and, it would not be in a position to meet the deadline, especially as the craft was rotating fast. He advised Capt. Wood to alter his angle of ascent and jettison the slab with a rope after he came within 80 metres of Trivikrama. There was no time to talk or argue. The great craft was in motion not only round its axis but also laterally. There was no other way but to follow the one suggested by Cauvery.

Garuda at last came near Trivikrama and jettisoned the slab. But, by then, the great craft had moved away a little, and it missed Garuda by one hundredth of a millisecond! For a super-perfect Trivikrama, it was a big error. The slab was dragged along by the enormous gravitational forces of the spacecraft and the distance between them increased rapidly. Along with it, a gift to extend man's life on the earth also eluded his grasp.

Mohan Sundara Rajan

*(To be concluded)*

# **SURYANARAYAN** is a lucky boy. but his father admires him more for his thrifty habits.

It was sometime in the summer of 1974 Mr. P. C. Misra (Chief Booking Clerk, S. E. Rly., Berhampur Ganjim) noticed that his child, Suryanarayan, had just crossed his seventh birthday. Thinking of the boy's future, Mr. Misra opened a Post Office Savings Bank account with Rs. 5. It was in the name of Master Suryanarayan, a primary class student.

Little Suryanarayan soon began to prefer gifts in cash; being the youngest in the family he did receive frequent gifts. And he insisted on putting all the cash in his POSB account. By January 1977, he had saved Rs. 271.

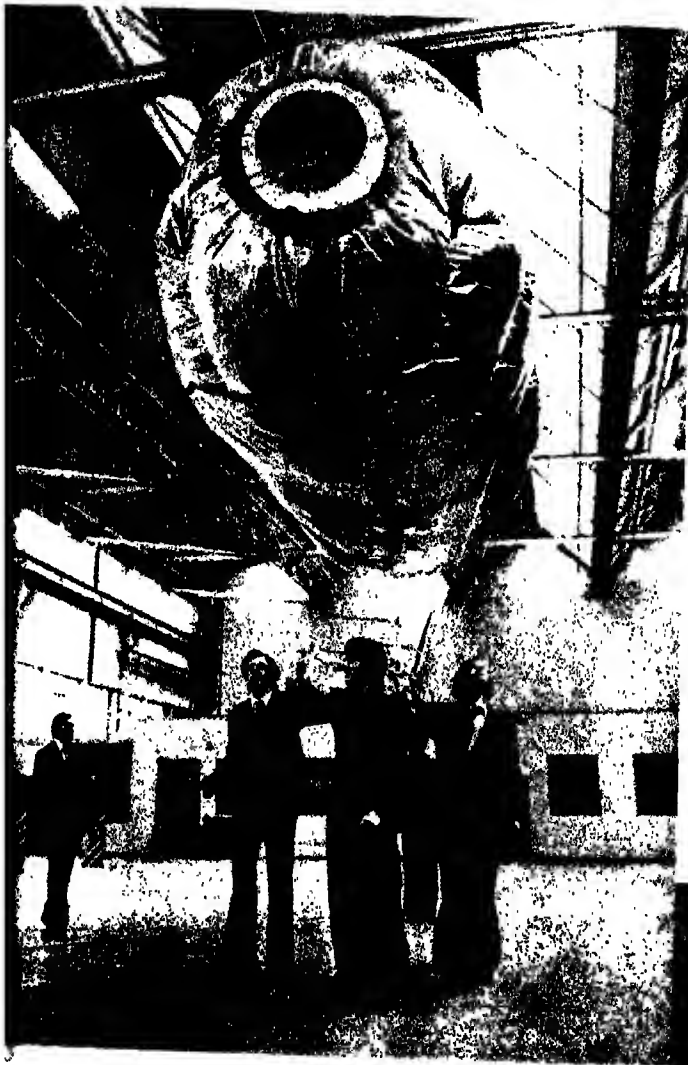
When the 7th Draw of POSB Prize Incentive Scheme was held on 30th July, 1977 at Lucknow, it was little Suryanarayan who bagged the first prize of Rs. one lakh.

The proud father has invested in POSB the entire prize money; he now has eight accounts, in the names of all members of the family.



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## Boys Make Airship

Boys of an Upper School in Bedford, England, recently made an airship during a technology course, in a hangar at Cardington—home of famous airships of the past. The boys, aged 14 and 15 years, began work in 1977 on a design exercise using thin materials and, under the guidance of a consultant, produced this 9.1 metre silver airship. Filled with more than 28 cubic metres of helium, the airship is propelled by a 10cc engine, producing  $\frac{1}{2}$  hp at 15,500 rpm, housed in a nacelle under the gas bag. After the hangar 'walkabout' (see picture at left), modifications are to be put in hand to get the airship in good trim for its first flight, when it will take aerial photographs of the surrounding area. Eventually the craft will go to the Air Museum at Shuttleworth.

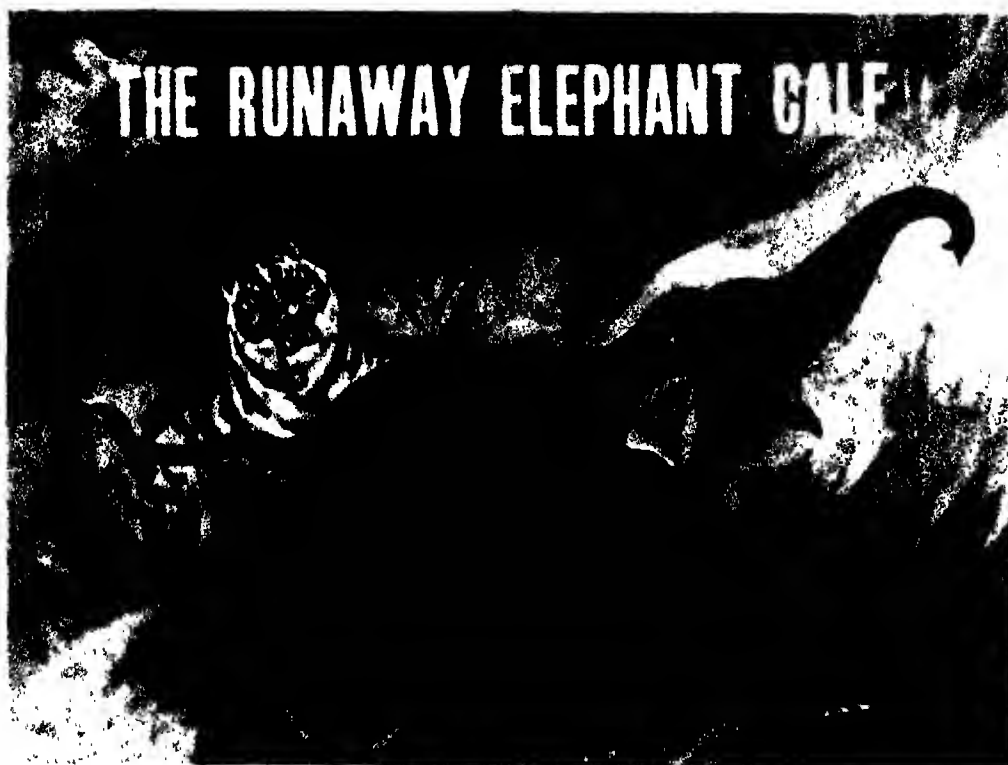
## Penguin for a Pet

It all happened when young Suzanne Riseley of Dover, in southern Tasmania, and her father were walking along the beach near their home. They saw a King Penguin swimming in shallow water, and as they walked back home, he followed them. Mr. Riseley twice took him back to the beach, but 'Big Bird' seemed to have been adamant. This 61cm, 9.5 kg penguin now follows Suzanne everywhere—even to her school where he is a big hit with the children (see picture at right). It is presumed that Big Bird came ashore because he was moulting, and that he would probably stay for nine months until the next mating season. It looks as if he will be part of the Riseley family till then!



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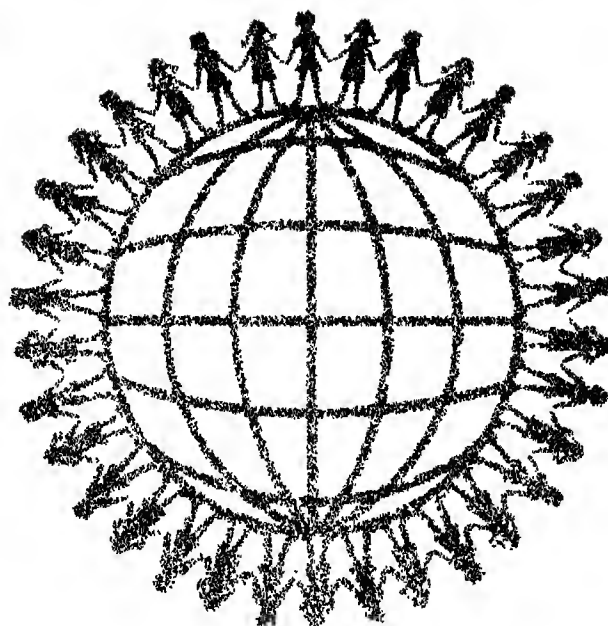


# CHILDREN'S World

PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH  
JULY 1978 VOL. XI NO. 4

Chief Editor  
SHANKAR

Editor  
K. RAMAKRISHNAN



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FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	THIRTY ONE	ALL OTHERS
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### DATE & TIME OF THE CONTEST:

Monday, the 25th September, 1978 from 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

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### Seventh Competition

*Total candidates:* 35,000, *Centres* 683, *Previous Question Papers:* Can be obtained by sending 40 p stamped self-addressed envelope of 9" x 4" size.

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President

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Secretary-General



## A Decision, and Then...

**I**T'S a wonder how people can actually concentrate while studying. I'm supposed to be studying right this minute (my exams are only two weeks away), and look what I'm doing! But what really puzzles me is how I ever managed to get through the H.S.

That was last year—somewhere about this time. There was just one month left for the D-day when I suddenly reached a most profound decision—I must start studying.

My firm (not really) decision was not the result of the frequent moral lectures from my parents: "Your career lies in your hands and the examination results. So work hard." My relatives: "You've got to prove that you are intelligent!" (Ha! I knew that I was) Even my friends: "Really! Think of all the money your parents are spending on your

education and blah, blah, blah! . . .!" To tell you the truth, I really had nothing better to do, what with my sister at school and my friends all slogging, so I had to study.

And so I began. I decided that 'slow and steady wins the race'—maybe it wasn't an appropriate saying for the occasion, but nevertheless, I had to begin somewhere.

Early morning study 'helps', so they say. At night I said, "Mama, please wake me up at 4.30."

"For what? You normally wake up at 9."

So I had second thoughts. I really needed ten hours of sleep.

"O.K., Mama, then wake me up at 9."

My first plan failed miserably and I quit the idea, after having a 'go' at it just once. It 'helps' they say. All it 'helped' me was in making me feel sleepy during the day.

Somchow I managed to put in two hours of study between 9 and 1. But as I said in the beginning—I wonder how on earth people can concentrate. I just couldn't.

My routine wasn't too bad, but bad enough. The ratio between studying and dreaming was 1:3. Maybe that's exaggeration, but it was almost that bad. One day of mother caught me in one of my day dreaming spells.

"Stop slouching over your desk and study!"

"But, Mama, I am studying."

"Oh, yes, you are! Studying the features of all your boy friends. Isn't there time for that later?"

"Mama, I don't dream of boys."

Just then, sister 'dear' piped in. "Then you're really weird. All girls of sixteen happen to be lost in romantic thoughts," she blabbered with a romantic air about her. As if she had to tell me that—but why in front of my mother?

"That's enough, you two," Mama said sternly. "Get back to work."

Work, yeah work!

I write my diary daily in the evenings. That's essential! Mama came in once while

I was doing just that, with cold coffee. I hastily covered up my writings.

"Aah!" she said happily. "I see that you're finally studying. If you keep at it, you'll, really do well!"

Oh! So she thought I was writing notes or something! Poor Mama. Let her be proud of me for a change—why spoil her happiness?

"Yes, Mama," I said nodding wisely. "I'm studying because I want to please you and Daddy. I want you both to be proud of your daughters."

Sister smirked from the other end of the room. I turned round and glared. Mama left and I sighed, "Thank god! I thought. 'Now I can get back to my diary. Now where was I...?'"

As I said, I write my diary every evening. But, one day, I happened to be not so lucky.

"Oh, so that's what you're doing!" yelled Mama sharply.

"Er what?" I inquired trying to sound innocent.

"You spend your time writing in your diary all day."

"That's not true, Mama. I mean, I only have to write one page a day, so how can it take the whole day?"

Sister sneered.

"Don't talk back! All I'm saying is that if you don't do well, you can sweep the house every morning and I'll pay you fifty rupees and the sweeper needn't come."

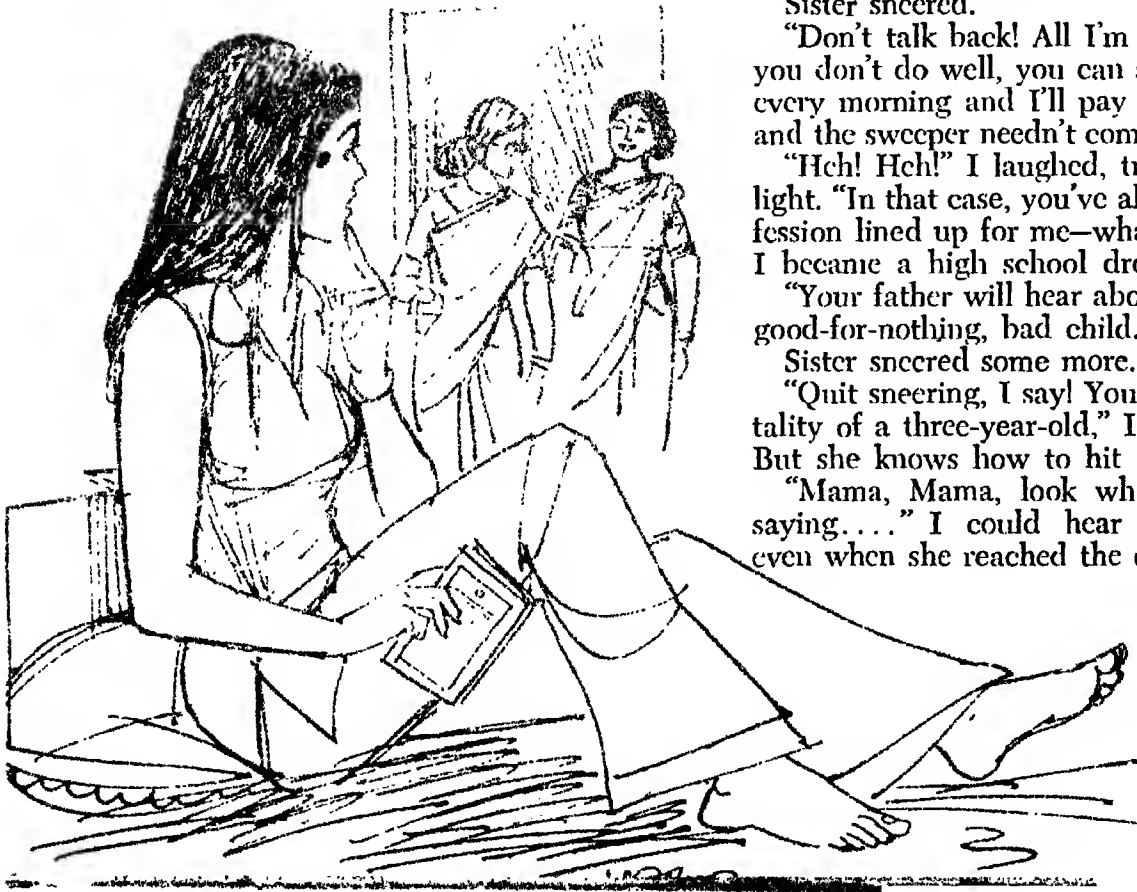
"Heh! Heh!" I laughed, trying to make it light. "In that case, you've already got a profession lined up for me—what do you say, if I became a high school drop-out?"

"Your father will hear about this. You're a good-for-nothing, bad child." She went out.

Sister sneered some more.

"Quit sneering, I say! You've got the mentality of a three-year-old," I snapped at her. But she knows how to hit where it hurts.

"Mama, Mama, look what this creep is saying..." I could hear her complaints even when she reached the other end of the



house. I heard Mama's comments, too. Both of them talking behind my back. They've got the nerve! Honestly! How could I study with all the noise?!!!

I slammed the door shut. 'Ah, good! Now no one can catch me at my wrong moments. So I always sat, with the door shut, in my room. But, one day, Daddy said that I shouldn't sit crammed up in a dark room. After all 'it's bad for the eyes.'

Back to square One.

One day, Mama had a guest in the afternoon. I took the opportunity to sit in my room and read the love story comics sister 'dear' had sneaked in for me.

I was in the midst of reading about Gary and Diana when my little sis came in and said, "Mama is paying you a lot of compliments. She and her friend are discussing what good results they expect from you. They think you're studying now."

Good! I thought. At least Mama doesn't genuinely believe that I'm a 'good-for-nothing'.

Too bad. Fate intended the worst for me. A couple of minutes later, Mama and her 'distinguished' friend entered my messy room. I had no time to conceal the 'spicy literature' I had on my lap.

"Oh, and this is your eldest daughter," said Mrs. 'Something'. "My! How you've grown, dear!" she continued tapping my head. "I can see that you're studying very hard," she went on, oblivious of the comic. "Your mother is very proud of you, and expects very good marks. Oh, you're studying geography! I myself was a student of the subject. Let me see what you're reading."

I sat very still and went on smiling absently and continued to do so even when the creepy lady discovered what I was trying to hide.

I grinned and said, "I wasn't studying right now. It's my... my break."

"Oh, yes," said my mother's friend, and turning to my furious Mama, she said, "Shantata, you have such a charming daughter," in a flat dry tone.

That evening was just too bad! I won't go into the details.

During the days that followed, I never got around to convincing my Mom that I actually studied (I actually did—though not much)

I had to try new tactics after that. One day, I approached my mother.

"Mama?"

"Don't call me Mama! I'm not your mother!"

Boyl she was still annoyed.

"But Mama...."

Silence.

"Mama, why aren't you my mother?"

She gave me such a disgusting look that I quickly said, "I mean, Mama, if you're not my mother, who can I appeal to for help?" (As much as this conversation sounds incredible, it is true!)

"Mama," I said, sounding very sad, "you have got a daughter who is going to fail. I can't help it. I just can't study. And I don't want to let you and Daddy down."

Mama's maternal instincts were aroused. Thank god for that! "Why don't you concentrate?" she asked very concerned. "When I was your age, I studied and did all what my mother told me to do and...."

Moralizing! Moralizing!

Anyway, soon after that Mama and I were on better terms....

...but not for long.

One day, I wanted to see a movie with my friends.

"Mama, can I see a movie? Huh, Mama?"

No reply.

"Mama," I said, in a softer tone, "please, can I see a movie?"

"NO!"

Oh! This is where my sister plus blackmail comes in. I begged my sister to get me the permission. She shook her head and said, "N-O."

Infuriated, I pulled her hair and said, "Stupid! If you don't manage to convince Mama, I'll not only wallop you, but I'll tell Daddy that you bunked school last week!"

The sneer on her face froze. "This is blackmail."

I merely said, "How profound!"

She walked out, but I was confident that I used the right approach. A few minutes later Mama called me.

"You can see the movie."

"Thank you, Mama. You're adorable, the most wonderful mother in the world," I sang out hugging her.

"Your sister says you've been studying. I

don't believe it."

"But, Mama, I have been studying." And after a pause I said, "A lot!" (of nonsense)

"How can you say that when you're on the phone the whole day?" she snapped.

"I can't be on the phone that much, because all my friends are busy slogging and . . . ." Oh! Oh! I dropped a brick!

"All your friends are studying?" she asked, almost lifting her ears like a dog, as if not to miss a single word.

"Uh! Well. . . ."

"Daughter!" My mother is in the habit of using formalities in such situations. "I can only say that if you don't do well, then. . . ."

" . . . . Yeah! Yeah! You'll pay me fifty rupees to sweep the house every morning and the sweeper needn't come."

One evening, Mama called me to help her set the table for dinner.

### THE WELCOME RAIN

The rain has started falling,  
First as drops so small,  
Then they grow bigger and bigger,  
And then they are not drops at all!  
Streaks they become,  
Faster and faster they come,  
They hide the whole ground  
And every ditch and mound.  
I thought the rain was a silvery curtain,  
As I watched from my door;  
The sky was cut by lightning,  
And thunder showed two clouds were  
fighting!

Soon short the streaks became,  
Drops they had become,  
The drops grew small  
And then they were no drops at all!  
The rain had stopped! !

*Anjali Muley (14)*

### THE RAIN

Rain, Rain, Rain,  
Welcome back again,  
With silvery clouds,  
Hanging over the green grounds.  
Rain, Rain, Rain,  
The peacocks are dancing for you in vain,  
With the frogs croaking very loudly,  
And the farmers sowing the seeds proudly.  
Rain, Rain, Rain,  
Welcome back again,

"I can't. I'm studying."

"Oh, yes," she said sarcastically, "you're always studying. . . ."

"I'm glad you've realized that." I was least bothered.

" . . . . especially when you're needed to help. Well!"

"Well what? I'm studying now! If you want, I'll help out and won't study and I'll fail! O.K.? So I'll help and fail!"

Mother blew up and walked off in a huff, but generally gave up. In fact, so did I. That is, I gave up trying to please my mother, concentrate on my studies, and everything that was a must. Thank god—I finally did do well in the H.S.

I could go on relating more incidents—but suppose my mother comes in right now and catches me writing this?

*Carie*

With the water pouring everywhere,  
With the clouds they make a fine pair.  
Rain, Rain, Rain,  
Thanks for coming again,  
By filling the dry rivers,  
You've done many great favours.

*R. Ramakant (13)*

### O IT'S RAINING

It is raining, I'm getting wet!  
Give me an umbrella  
Hooo . . . . Hmmm . . . . Aaaaa!  
O God, give me sun  
The rain is coming pit pat tip tap,  
The clouds are saying drrr! grrr! !  
Brrr! I'm feeling afraid  
O God, please stop the rain  
Or give me a shade

*Shonu Nangia (8)*

### THE RAINBOW

The rainbow has bright colours  
I like to see it shine;  
It is as bright as flowers,  
I wish they were mine.  
I like to see the rain,  
And then the rainbow;  
I look from the window-pane,  
And see both of them;  
When I see the rainbow  
I always say: O what a lovely day!

*Arati Iyer (10)*

# UNCLE MOHAN IN SEARCH OF A JOB

Readers may recall Uncle Mohan's adventures abroad—how he escaped from ruffians with the help of a 'burkha', how he was presented with a Mexican hat, how he came to acquire a Japanese umbrella, how he encountered the Gulu Gulu monster—to mention only a few. We begin another series describing his adventures in India.

"**M**OHAN," said my father as we sat at the dining table, "I think you should do two things."

My Uncle Mohan, Ramu, and I looked up from our plates. Even my mother stopped pouring water into our glasses. We all gazed at my father. "First you should look for a job and then get married!" There was a short silence.

Uncle Mohan nodded his head a couple of times before he replied, "One is as difficult as the other."

"Very correct," said my mother, after she had filled our glasses. "But there is no hurry for either. Right now let us finish our dinner peacefully. Who knows what tomorrow will bring us?"

The next day brought nothing exceptional. There was the postman who brought some letters, most





of them bills and handbills; the milkman brought milk as usual; the vegetable vendor brought tomatoes and demanded five rupees for a kilo which upset my mother immensely and made her complain bitterly about the rising prices. The newspaperman brought the newspaper. It was the newspaper that my Uncle Mohan seemed to have been waiting for. He folded it neatly and took it up to his room.

"Come on, kids," he invited us, "let's see what the news is today."

We all squatted on the carpet in the guest room and spread the newspaper in front of us.

Uncle Mohan remarked that there was hardly anything nice ever written in a newspaper. "It's either an air crash, or a coup, or a tornado, or a train accident, or..."

Ramu laughed "Ho ho ha ha" as if it was a joke. But Uncle Mohan grew serious as he looked at the last page. "Let's see what there is in store for me and my need for a job."

We put our heads together and ran our fingers down the column marked SITUATIONS VACANT. An international school wanted a PGT teacher in Biology, a qualified Laboratory Assistant, and an experienced Bus Driver.

"Ah," said Uncle Mohan, "what a shame! I don't know how to drive a bus."

A Data Products firm required a Lady Telephone Operator.

"Too bad," laughed Uncle. "I'm not a lady."

Someone wanted a Rubber Technologist, another a Market Engineer, yet another a Manager with appropriate qualifications and five years experience for a hotel in Agra.

"That is not bad," I cried, "then we can visit you during our holidays."

But Uncle Mohan shook his head sadly and said that he was neither experienced nor qualified for managing a hotel. Experience of *staying* in hotels he had aplenty, but that would not help him at all! So, we kept on searching for a vacancy for our Uncle.

There was one for an Ayah willing to go to America.

Uncle Mohan said that he would have liked to go to America but not as an Ayah.

Suddenly, he frowned and looked at a big advertisement. "Not bad," he murmured, "not bad!" And he read it softly as if to himself: 'Al-Basti and Muktha Associates, Civil Engineers and Contractors, Teheran, requires a young and energetic Project Engineer, for a team engaged in construc-

tion of township projects and residential and commercial multistorreyyed buildings.'

And he read on silently. Suddenly, he cried, "18 thousand dollars per year. Too good! Six weeks paid leave! Air passage for self and family! I have no family! Medical reimbursement.... That's it, that's it, children, that's the job for me."

All of a sudden, Uncle Mohan was very excited. He sprang to his feet and said, "I think you'd better go and call your mother."

My mother listened intently and then smiled. "Wonderful, now sit down here, Mohan. I'll bring you the typewriter. Get your bio-data ready."

Turning to Ramu and me she said, "Don't disturb your uncle. Go, run and buy some big envelopes and stamps."

Ramu and I rushed down to the post office and selected the most beautiful stamps for good luck. When the letter was finally ready, we personally went and posted it. There was nothing more to be done except to wait.

In the evening, my father came home with good news. His friend, Mr. Biman Lal, Editor-in-Chief of the 'Midnight Special', was in need of a young journalist and thought that my Uncle could be the man he was looking for.

"But Uncle Mohan is going to Teheran," I said. I was astonished to see my Uncle blush.

"No, no," he said, "nothing is certain."

"But why do you want to go to Teheran?" asked my father. "You must stay in India and help in building up the nation."

The next day, Uncle got ready to go to the office of the 'Midnight Special'. Soon, he came out of his room, winked at us, went down the steps, crossed the garden path, and was gone. Ramu and I waited impatiently.

And, after what looked like timeless waiting, we saw him come back. He stood in front of the door and smiled an uncertain smile.

My mother took one look at his face and said, "I know it, Mohan, you haven't got the job!"

My Uncle Mohan threw up his hands in mock despair and cried, "But listen, Manju, just listen to what happened."

My mother crossed her arms over her chest and asked coolly, "So tell us, what did happen?"

His mischievous smile was once again back in his eyes. "Just listen, just listen. I know it is hard to believe," he said.

"When I entered the office of the 'Midnight Special', Mr. Lal was sitting behind a large table, glancing through a lot of papers, proofs and

manuscripts.

"Ah, sit down, Mr. Patel, please sit down," he waved at me, not taking his eyes off the papers. 'Have a cup of tea!' He peered at me over the edge of his teacup and asked me whether I liked to write.

"I nodded enthusiastically.

"Good," he replied and asked me whether I had written any articles before.

"Yes, of course," I smiled confidently.

"Fine," said Mr. Lal approvingly. 'Now tell me everything you know about Ravinder Shanker.'

"Ravinder Shanker?" I asked, surprised and pleased. 'Why, he is a good friend of mine. We studied together in England!'

"What?" cried Mr. Lal and nearly dropped his teacup. 'You studied with Ravinder Shanker in England? I'm talking about Ravinder Shanker the freedom-fighter!'

"I'm sorry," I murmured and knew that I had lost my chance of becoming a staff reporter of the 'Midnight Special'. Whatever wonderful and clever things I might utter thereafter would not make the slightest difference.

"So, when he asked me what I felt about the alarming rise of malaria cases, I replied that I felt sick.

"The Editor blinked. He then questioned me about my views on El Paramoma breaking away from Gurawa.

"I sat back in my chair comfortably and said coolly that both the countries would break into pieces.

"Mr. Lal closed his eyes. When he opened them again, he asked very softly, 'And what are your views about the Lewis Morris Memorial Trust?'

"I looked straight into his face and replied, 'I do not trust it.'

"That was the last straw! Mr. Lal got up, shook my hand, and told me that I would hear from him soon!"

Uncle Mohan gazed down at us and smiled. Even my mother's eyes sparkled, though she tried very hard not to laugh. "Mohan," she said, "I'm certain you'll never hear from him!"

My mother was right. Uncle did not hear from the Editor-in-Chief of the 'Midnight Special'. He did not mind. But he did mind when he did not hear from Teheran either.

"Don't worry," said my mother, who too was

waiting for the letter as much as we were. "My little finger is itching. Something is going to happen."

Ten days had passed and there was no letter for my Uncle Mohan!

But my mother's little fingers kept on itching, or at least that's what she kept on saying. And, then, one fine morning, my brother came running in with a long envelope in his hand. "Uncle Mohan! Uncle Mohan!" he cried. "For you."

My Uncle opened the envelope. He read the contents silently. And then he said, "Caramba!" and laughed. "They're considering my application. They'll let me know their decision very soon. Now, what does your little finger say, Manju?"

My mother smiled.

"Something is going to happen!" she said, and she looked like the Oracle of Delphi.

She was right. Things did happen. "Things I would have never dreamt of," said my Uncle Mohan later.

*Sigrun Srivastava*

## HELD OVER

The features 'How and Why' and "Pen-Friends Corner" will appear next month.

—Editor

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# TRICKSTER TRICKED

**H**OWLER was a very selfish jackal. He liked to see other animals getting into trouble.

Whenever the other jackals found a good pile of food, they always shared it among themselves. Howler, too, would be invited to join the feast. But, he never bothered to inform the others, if he came across a kill. Very soon, the other jackals realised how foolish they had been to share their food with Howler. They went to him and said, "You are mean, selfish, and cunning. We shall never share our food with you again. Why should we, when you have never shared your food with us?"

Howler said softly, "I have never shared my food with you because I have never found enough! The day I find more food than what I require, I shall invite you all to eat it."

"You are selfish and greedy!" cried the other jackals. "Even if you were to find a big dead camel, you would only consider it insufficient for yourself. We don't want to have anything to do with a selfish creature like you. Good-bye and good luck!" Saying this the jackals left.

After they had all gone, Howler went to meet his naive friend, the camel. He related to the camel everything that the other jackals had said. But the camel, too, told Howler, that they had been right in accusing him of being greedy.

Howler became very angry with the camel for siding with the other jackals. He secretly planned to get the camel a good thrashing.

Once, Howler was very hungry. He roamed the whole day, but could not find even a morsel to eat. Suddenly, he came to a stream. He decided to fill his stomach with water. As he was about to start drinking, he saw across the stream scores of vultures flying above a sugarcane field.

"Surely," said Howler to himself, "those

vultures could not be feeding on sugarcane! Some cattle must be lying dead in the field. I must get across the stream before the vultures finish the lot! And I must be quick, lest the other jackals got to know of it."

But how was Howler to get across the stream? He could not swim! Howler then thought of his friend, the camel.

"Ah, yes!" cried Howler jubilantly. "The camel is very tall. He has long legs. I shall ask him to take me across. I shall tell him about the succulent sugarcane which he can enjoy. He will surely agree to take me on his back across the stream." Pleased with his plan, Howler went to the camel.

"Hello, friend," said Howler politely. "You look hungry! I cannot bear to see you suffering like this. There is a stream nearby, and across the stream there is a sugarcane field. I am sure you would like to have some sugarcane. I will accompany you, if you like."

"Sure!" cried the unsuspecting camel. "Do take me to that stream. I can take you across on my back."

The camel followed Howler to the stream. There he jumped onto the camel's back, and the two crossed the stream. Just as Howler had thought, there was a dead buffalo in the field. He drove away the vultures and sat down to enjoy a really good feed. Meanwhile, the camel helped himself to some juicy sugarcane.

When Howler had had his fill, he remembered his plan to get the camel a good beating. So he began to howl. He wanted to attract the farmers so that they would come running to save their sugarcane. He knew that they would, on seeing the camel eating their sugarcane, become angry and beat him. Then, Howler thought, he would roll on his back and laugh.

"Be quiet!" warned the camel. "Your howling will get me into trouble! The farmers will come here with their sticks and beat me!"

"I can't help it, friend," said Howler. "When my stomach is full, I usually howl to express my satisfaction!" And he howled louder than ever.

In the meantime, the farmers who had heard the jackal's howling, came running fast, carrying long sticks. The jackal went and hid himself in a safe place. The poor camel was caught. The farmers beat him up and drove him towards the stream.

With his back all sore and aching, the camel had just stepped into the stream, when Howler came out from his hiding and said, "How could you possibly leave behind

your dearest friend?" Without waiting for an answer, he jumped on to the camel's back.

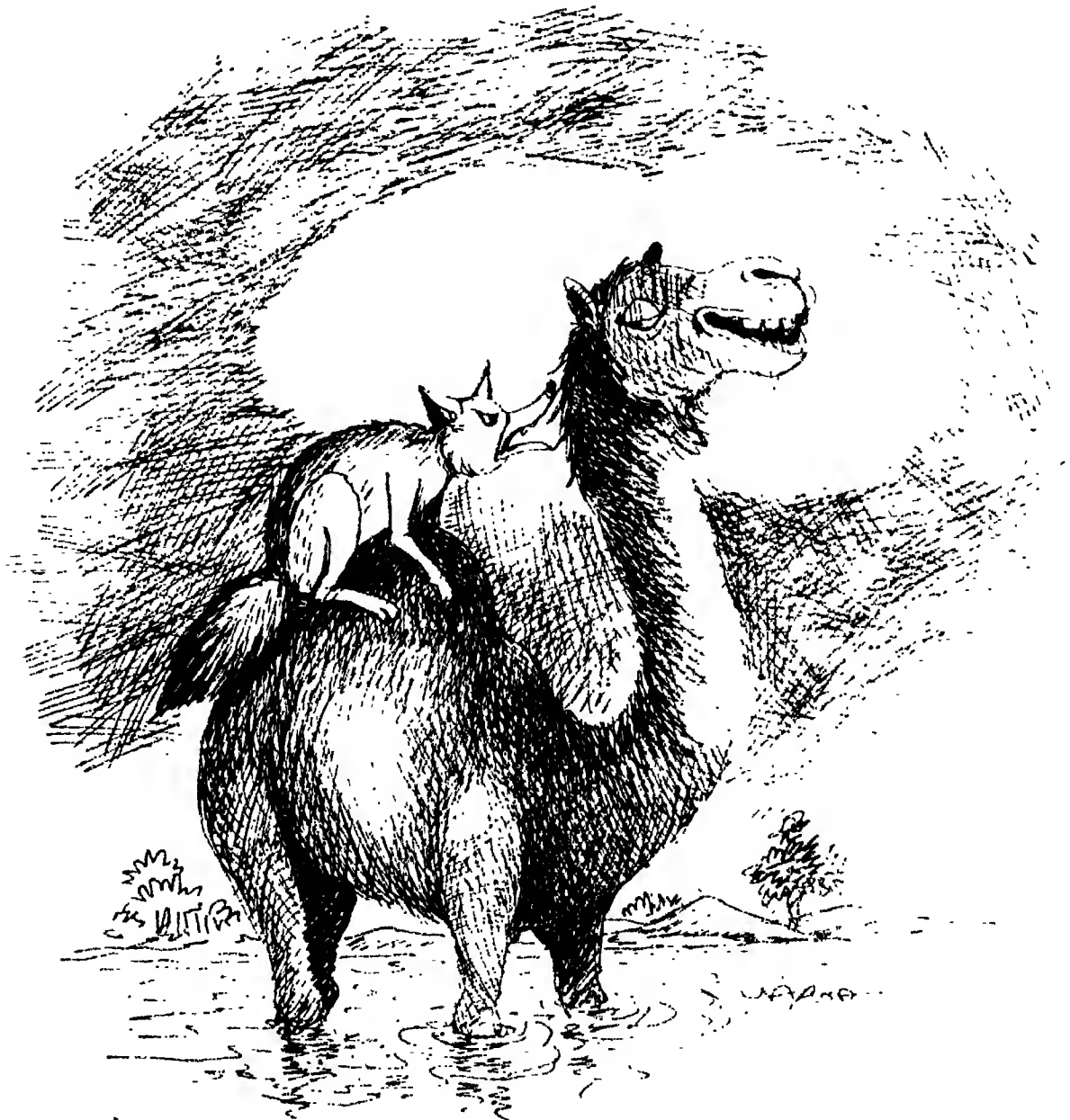
He was angry with Howler, but he kept mum. When they reached the middle of the stream, the camel began to kneel.

"Hey!" cried the jackal. "What are you doing, my friend? I shall be drowned!"

"I can't help it!" retorted the camel. "When my stomach is full, I usually roll to express my satisfaction!"

So saying, the camel rolled over, and Howler fell into the water and was drowned.

*Kuntal Gomez*



# HOW A MAN OF GOD TURNED GUERRILLA

**A** SAD paradox of warfare is that it converts even the mildest of men into cold-blooded fighters. This was what happened to William Roberts, but with a difference.

He was an American who, much against his wishes, got caught in the throes of the Second World War—a war in which he became one of the heroes who gave up everything for humanity.

Roberts was a small-built man, good-natured, with none of the rugged mettle heroes are supposed to be made of. His ambition was to become a clergyman in his hometown in Nebraska. He was happy there amidst the tall cornstalks that swayed majestically in the wind.

The Great Depression in America, however, landed him in the Navy. But, he did not abandon his deep faith in god. In the Navy, he opted for the post of signalman, so that he could avoid fighting and bloodshed. A regular churchgoer, he assisted in the duties of the church and earned for himself the nickname 'Preacher'.

When World War II broke out, Roberts was at Cavite, a U.S. Navy base in the Philippines. But, as the War reached its full fury, he was reluctantly sucked into its vortex. The Philippines was overrun by the Japanese forces. Many bases, including Cavite, were captured by them and Roberts was taken prisoner.

Deep in the sweltering jungles of the Philippines, under the shadow of Mount Baco, was the notorious Mindoro Prison Camp to which Roberts was sent. There were 3,000 prisoners-of-war in this malaria-infested, pest-ridden dump. There was hardly enough to eat. The stream which served as the camp toilet was also the source of drinking water. And to add to all this was the inhuman treatment meted out to the prisoners.

The officer-in-charge of the camp was

Major Aritaki, who bore mankind, in general, a secret grudge. One morning, on his inspection rounds, he suddenly realised with some shock that one of the prisoners did not bow before him. The Major walked upto him slowly. A straight and steady Roberts stared at him defiantly.

"Why don't you bow before me, like the others?" Aritaki shouted.

"I bow only to god and to no one else," came the proud reply.

"I'll teach you to bow," screamed Aritaki and he gave Roberts a blow with the hilt of his sword. This was the signal to the guards there, who assaulted him further. Roberts fainted under the repeated blows.

The Major sentenced him to 30 days' solitary confinement and half rations. When he came out of the cell after a month, Roberts was just a ragged scarecrow with sunken eyes protruding bones, and hands that looked like claws. He was taken to Aritaki who ordered him to apologise publicly. The emaciated Roberts, still tough in spirit, refused.

"Beat him till he obeys!" were the Major's orders.

A volley of brutal knocks sent pain searing through his body, but he did not utter any word of apology. 'God, give me courage' was all he prayed. After two weeks of continuous torture, the Japs gave up. They could break him, but could not bend him.

This incident changed Roberts completely. His fellow prisoners realised, too, that this mild-mannered man was no coward. When his convictions were endangered, he could put up a stiff resistance and fight back.

'Preacher' Roberts's mind was now full of thoughts of vengeance. He became obsessed with the idea of escape, to avenge the wrongs done to him. He did get an opportunity, when he was put to forced

labour in the fields. Unable to stand the blazing afternoon sun, the guards on duty had retired under the shade. Roberts and another prisoner made good the chance and fled from the prison camp. For a whole week, they kept ahead of their pursuers, living on jungle berries. On the eighth day, completely exhausted, they stumbled into a guerilla hideout commanded by a Filipino named Henrique.

From then began Roberts's career as a killer. The quiet, softspoken, churchgoing, peace-loving man of Nebraska, turned into one of the boldest guerilla fighters of World War II. Before he killed an enemy soldier, he would pray to god to forgive him.

The American fought side by side with the Filipinos. Soon, Henrique grew to trust Roberts and gave the command to him. He proved equal to the task and led many suc-

cessful raids on Japanese outposts. He possessed qualities of leadership, and his band of guerillas, known as Roberts's Raiders, soon became a fearsome lot. Japanese convoys were attacked and their arms looted by them. For eight long months, the Japanese tried in vain to capture Roberts, dead or alive.

But fate had one more important mission for Roberts. He was now toying with the idea of freeing the prisoners from the well-guarded Mindoro Camp. Its memory still haunted him. Henrique tried to dissuade him. "It's a risky operation. We won't survive the attack, 'Preacher'."

But, Roberts was adamant. "If my life can secure liberation for the thousands languishing in that hell-hole, I'll gladly sacrifice it. With proper planning, we can bring it off."



On a hot September evening in 1944, 'Preacher' Roberts led his band of a hundred dedicated guerillas in what was to be his last brilliant raid against the Japs. In a reckless assault, he stormed the gates of Mindoro. But the Japanese had spotted them. In the exchange of gunfire that followed, several people on both sides were killed. Roberts, with blood flowing from the wounds on his thigh and arm, managed to set the prisoners free.

Soon, Japanese reinforcements arrived. Roberts knew that he was hopelessly outnumbered. "Get out of here, everyone!" he shouted, as bullets came from all directions,

gunning down the prisoners and the guerillas. Roberts, who was engrossed in herding his men out to a safer place, was taken unawares, when a Japanese tank opened fire at him from behind. The yell, "Look out, Preacher!" came a split second too late. He was dead before he knew what had hit him.

Thus ended the saga of the pious revolutionary who had wanted to become a man of god and ended up as a guerilla. 'Preacher' Roberts's supreme sacrifice was, however, not in vain. He had freed 1,100 prisoners, who later joined the guerilla group to fight for the freedom of the Philippines.

*Lakshmi Mohan*

## HAGAMUCHI'S SACRIFICE

**I**N a small cottage in a Japanese village there once lived an old man named Hagamuchi and his family. The cottage stood at the top of a low hill overlooking the sea. The fields around the cottage were full of corn, ready for the harvest, shining golden in the bright sunlight.

Hagamuchi was alone with his grandson, as the rest of the family had gone to the town at the foot of the hill to make merry with their friends. It was a festival day. The old man sat watching from his cottage-door the gay processions with lanterns pass by. His little grandson played idly at his feet.

Suddenly, Hagamuchi thought that he had noticed something unusual about the sea. The sea had been rough the whole day, but now the water seemed more shallow than usual. From a distance he could see a bank of sand rising up out of the water. All at once he was reminded of a story which his own grandfather had told him when he was a boy. He had been told how, on one occasion, the sea had gone so far back from the land that the bank of sand could be seen and then, as the tide flowed in, how it came with such force that it broke down the wall along the seashore and destroyed a number of villages.

Hagamuchi continued to scan the horizon for any sign of approaching danger. At last, he saw in the distance a great tide com-

ing swiftly towards the land. He knew that the approaching wave would bring great destruction to the town. So, he called out to the people below, but they were so busy enjoying themselves that no one heard his voice. How could he warn them in time?

Suddenly, a thought struck him. He seized a stick lying nearby and tied a piece of cloth to it. Then he dipped it in an oil jar and set light to it. Holding the flaming torch, he set fire to the thatched roof of his own cottage! His purpose was served. At once, the temple bell was rung in the town below to warn the people of an outbreak of fire. They left their feasting and merry-making and hastened to the top of the hill to save the old man and his grandson.

Within a few minutes, there came leaping a great, roaring wave on to the shore and broke down house after house in the little town. Many homes and villages were destroyed and hundreds of people were drowned. Only those who had flocked to save the old man and the boy were not drowned.

The selfless Hagamuchi, by sacrificing his own home, had thus saved the lives of hundreds of people. They felt so grateful to him that they built a temple in his memory, and to this day every boy and girl in Japan is told the story of Hagamuchi.

*J. Sundaresan (14)*  
*India*



**T**HE kingdom of Dyfed was in South Wales. It was a small country, but its hills were blue, the fields were green, and the crystal clear streams were full of silvery fish. It was a 'land of milk and honey', and every man lived in peace and prosperity.

Many years ago, Dyfed was ruled by Ory. The young king, tall and with golden hair, was as handsome as he was good. He lived in a palace in the heart of the city of Lamberth. The palace had spires touching the clouds.

With him lived his wife, the lovely Elaine, his mother, Reannon, and his best friend Manadywan. Manadywan had helped Ory win hundreds of battles and the king loved him like a brother. They spent their

days in hunting, and in the evening they feasted on their game, while listening to a minstrel's songs.

The guests screamed in terror. Soon a thick mist covered the palace. It entered the dining hall and a darkness, blacker than midnight, fell. One could not see even the person sitting next to oneself.

The mist cleared after a while. "Thank God!" said Ory in relief, but the next moment his eyes opened wide with shock, for all the guests and the servants had vanished with the mist! There were only four persons in the room—Ory, Elaine, Reannon, and Manadywan.

*The ancient literature of Wales is found in four books – The Black Book of Carmarthen, The Book of Aneirin, The Book of Taliessin, and The Red Book of Hergest. They are anthologies containing many stories. One of them is...*



days in hunting, and in the evening they feasted on their game, while listening to a minstrel's songs.

The two friends used to ride faster than the wind, followed by a pack of hounds trained for hunting. They didn't have a care in the world and the pleasure-filled days seemed to last forever.

On a beautiful summer evening, all the lords and ladies were invited to a grand feast in the palace. At the head of the table sat queen mother Reannon amidst her ladies-in-waiting. All the noblemen and generals and their wives were present. The minstrels sang songs of joy, and the jugglers showed all sorts of clever tricks. The tables were covered with golden dishes filled with delicious food.

The feast was nearly over when suddenly the sky was overcast and a deafening peal of thunder shook the palace to its very foun-

two men groaned, and Elaine and her mother-in-law wept.

At daybreak, the four of them went out. The vast palace garden had withered. Every leaf, each blade of grass was scorched and not a single flower could be seen anywhere. The verdant kingdom of Dyfed had become a desert. They went north and south and they went east and west, but not a trace of a human being could be found. The only living things they met were owls, squirrels, mice, snakes, and wolves.

At last, the queen mother cried, "Lud! It is Lud the wizard who has put a spell on our kingdom."

"But why?" asked Ory.

"Because your father had killed his brother. He was a wicked magician. Lud had vowed to avenge his brother's death, but that was many years ago, and we had forgotten all about him," Reannon recalled.



"That solves the mystery," said Elaiuc, "but how are we to break his spell?"

No one could answer her.

Many days passed. The large larder of the palace was soon empty. They lived on wild roots and berries and the game which Ory and Manadywan hunted with the help of their hounds. Being beasts, they had escaped from the evil spell. The palace seemed all the more cheerless to the four because it was so large. They did not know that greater trouble was in store for them.

One morning, Ory and Manadywan were out on their usual hunting trip. Suddenly, the hounds paused near a bush and started baying loudly. Within a few moments, a huge white boar ran out. The two friends ran after the animal.

The boar led them to a castle—a newly-built castle. They had never seen it, so they stopped in wonder. The boar, followed by the hounds, entered the castle. Ory and Manadywan waited for the hounds to come out

but they remained inside.

"I'm going to bring back the dogs," said Ory.

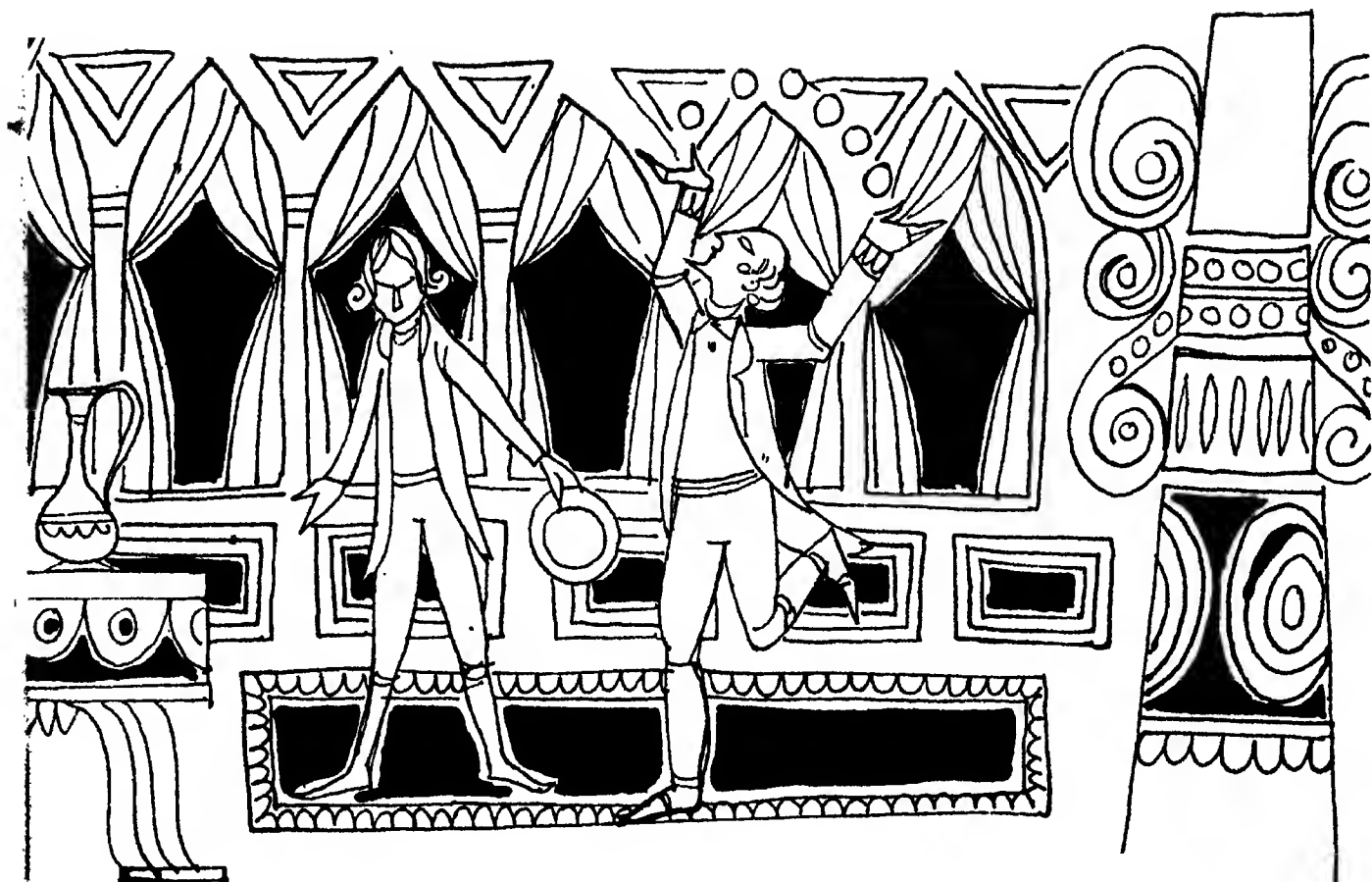
"Oh, no," cried Mandywan. "It is a magic castle. Probably it has been built by Lud."

"But I must bring back my hounds," said Ory, and before Manadywan could stop him, he had entered the castle.

Ory crossed the threshold and came to a large courtyard. In the centre was a fountain. A marble swan of wonderful workmanship was tied to it by a golden chain. Ory looked at the swan with great admiration.

'Even the greatest artist in my kingdom could not have made a swan like this,' he thought, touching one of its wings. Then a strange thing happened.

Ory could not pull his hand away from the marble swan. Nor could he move an inch. He tried to shout for help, but no sound came out of his dry throat.



Manadywan waited for his friend till the daylight faded. He did not want to enter the magic castle, so he returned to the palace.

Reannon met Manadywan at the doorsteps of the palace. "Where is Ory? Where are the hounds?" she asked all in one breath, looking very worried.

Manadywan then told her all that had happened.

"What kind of a friend are you? Aren't you ashamed to come back without Ory?" cried Reannon in rage and, before anyone could stop her, she ran towards the magic castle.

In no time she reached there and came to the spot where her son stood still by the fountain.

"Thank God you are safe!" cried the queen mother, greatly relieved.

Ory stood rooted to the floor, as immovable as a statue.

"What's the matter?" cried his mother, shaking him.

As soon as she touched her son, she got stuck to him. They stood side by side, both paralysed and dumb. Suddenly, deafening peals of thunder were heard and once again a dense fog clouded the castle. The mist cleared after a few minutes—but the castle vanished with it. The mother and son disappeared, too.

Manadywan and Elaine were the only human beings left in Dyfed now, and they were full of sorrow. They stayed in the palace all day long. With the disappearance of the hounds, Manadywan could no longer hunt.

After a few days of starvation, Elaine, the beautiful queen, said, "Let's grow wheat. We need food, and the work will make us forget our sorrows."

"You're right, madame," replied Manadywan, feeling cheerful after a long time.

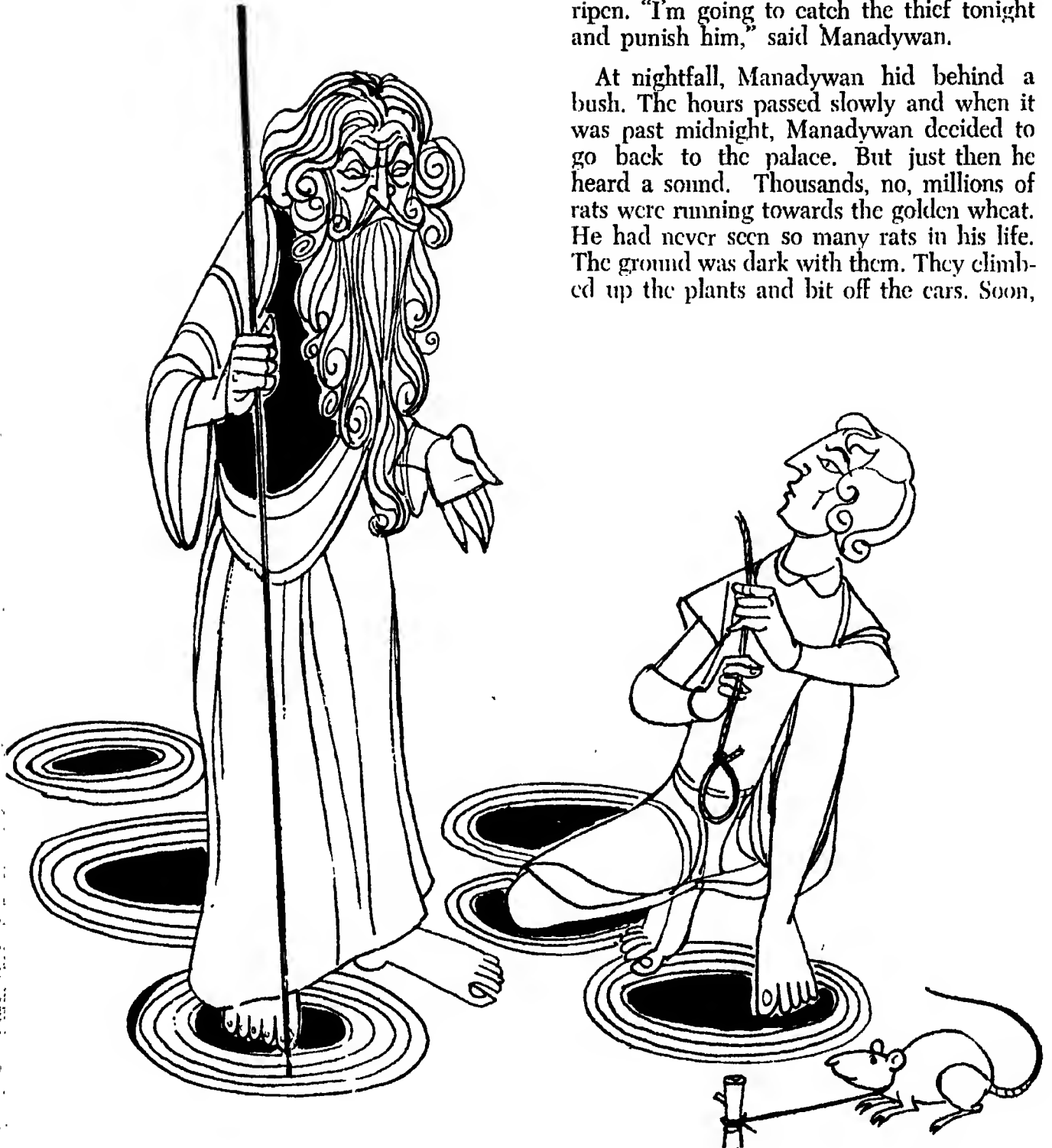
Manadywan cleared the wild land the very next day. It was ploughed and the seeds were sown. Elaine helped him all the time, working harder than a peasant. At last, the time for reaping came.

"I'll cut the wheat tomorrow," Manadywan told Elaine. He went to the field the next morning.

What did he see! All the ripe ears of wheat were missing. Only the tall stalks were standing. Elaine was very much disappointed.

In another field the wheat was about to ripen. "I'm going to catch the thief tonight and punish him," said Manadywan.

At nightfall, Manadywan hid behind a bush. The hours passed slowly and when it was past midnight, Manadywan decided to go back to the palace. But just then he heard a sound. Thousands, no, millions of rats were running towards the golden wheat. He had never seen so many rats in his life. The ground was dark with them. They climbed up the plants and bit off the ears. Soon,



not a single ear of wheat was left. Enraged, Manadywan rushed after them, but they were too swift for him. But, he caught the biggest of them all—a big-sized white rat.

Manadywan brought the rat to the palace and showed it to Elaine. "I've caught one of the thieves, and I'm going to hang it," he said.

"Whoever has heard of such a thing? You should let it go," said Elaine.

"No, I've decided to hang it," Manadywan said very firmly.

Elaine fell silent.

Manadywan took the white rat to a nearby hill. He was busy making a noose when he was interrupted. An old man with a long flowing white beard came near him.

"Who are you?" asked Manadywan in surprise.

The old man did not answer him. Instead, he asked, "What are you doing?"

"Punishing a thief," replied Manadywan.

The old man stared at the white rat in dismay.

"I want to buy it for seven gold coins," he said at last.

"No, thank you. I've made up my mind to kill it," replied Manadywan, holding the rat tightly.

"Fourteen gold coins," offered the old man.

"I won't sell it for all the gold in the world. I don't know why you're so eager to buy a rat. Unless, of course, it is a magic creature," said Manadywan.

"Well, it is no ordinary rat," admitted the old man.

"So you are Lud!" cried Manadywan.

"Yes, indeed," replied the old man. "My brother was killed by Ory's father. I've put a spell on Dyfed to avenge his death. The

white rat is my wife. She has helped me a lot. It was she who had turned herself into the white boar. I cannot let her be killed, so please give her back to me."

"I'll let her go if you bring back Ory and his mother alive," said Manadywan.

Lud then spoke a few strange, magic words.

Ory and his mother could be seen from a distance. Manadywan ran towards them and all three of them embraced each other and rejoiced. The pack of hounds, too, came running swiftly.

"May I take my wife home now?" asked Lud eagerly.

"Not until everyone has returned, alive and well," replied Manadywan.

In a trice, the hillside filled with all those people who had disappeared during the feast.

"Now make Dyfed what it was before you put your wicked spell on it," ordered Manadywan.

The old man spoke more strange words. At once, the withered land turned green, and every home was full of happy men, women, and children.

"Are you satisfied now?" asked Lud rather impatiently.

"No. You must promise that you will never again set foot on the soil of Dyfed," said Manadywan.

"I promise!" cried Lud.

Only then did Manadywan let the white rat go. The old man chanted a rhyme and it turned into a middle-aged woman. The next moment, the couple vanished, never to return.

Once again, Ory invited all the guests to a feast—a bigger one. This time no magic mist appeared, and so everyone made merry fearlessly.

*Sujaya Sen*

## SCIENCE FICTION

# RAMU IN ORBIT

### THE STORY SO FAR

It was the summer of 2077. The sylvan meadows of Ootacamund, in Tamilnadu, suddenly echoed an alarm. "Bleep! Bleep!" The radio telescope there had picked up some strange signals. Other tracking stations in India and elsewhere were alerted. The giant telescope at Kavalur spotted something strange in the skies. It was seen orbiting Mars. Was it a spaceship? Adding to the suspense was some intriguing radio noise. Was the alien spacecraft poised for an attack? It was concluded that the unusual signals meant a message for man.

An Indian satellite, 'Rohini', flashed a series of messages declaring friendship and offering any help that might be required. The Rohini Mission Control reported a queer behaviour of the oscillograph. The computer message urged a "meeting" 1,410,000 km away from the earth? An urgent conference in Sriharikota decided on a rendezvous, with the aid of a reusable space shuttle. Preparations were launched for sending a team to meet the alien spacecraft, now named 'Trivikrama'. The international team of 20 scientists, including four women, on board 'Cauvery' was led by Captain Venkatesh. Cosmonaut Ramu, his wife Anju, also a space-woman, and navigator Padma made up the other Indian members.

While in 'parking orbit', Cauvery received the message that Trivikrama had moved away without any warning. On the third day, Cauvery got the warning of a solar flare. The crew and the Mission Control then realized why the alien craft had moved away—to avoid being caught in the solar flare—a clear indication of superior intelligence! The spotting of the retro-fire of Trivikrama brought in some hope of a rendezvous.

On approaching the alien spacecraft, Cauvery noticed what a huge complex it was—resembling a spiral galaxy. However, there was no apparent docking device. Nobody could also guess whether there was any living being inside.

The Mission Control gave the go-ahead for a spacewalk and possible entry into Trivikrama. Cosmonauts Ramu and Anju got ready, and soon the space couple were actually standing on the hull of Trivikrama! They saw an array of sophisticated instrument panels and gauges inside. Though there was no visible response from Trivikrama, Cauvery

noticed that whenever there was a change of display or messages, there were synchronous broadcasts from the alien spacecraft. Were the messages being transmitted to another mastercraft?

Venkatesh dramatically beamed infra-red rays on the alien spacecraft. It was as if a million headlamps had been suddenly trained on a dark night. Cauvery, understandably, received a message from Trivikrama. "They" wanted to know more about the human brain! In a strange behaviour, Trivikrama ejected what looked like a slab. It stayed in space for some time before it began going down towards the earth, but continued to orbit along with Trivikrama.

A flutter was caused by the sudden presence of another intruder in space—this time a second spacecraft from the earth. And it was chasing the slab! The spaceship even recovered it from space. Cauvery received orders: "Abandon Mission!" Had the celestial aliens turned their wrath on the earthly 'intruders'?

There was an eerie silence for sometime which was broken only by a shrill cry from Anju. "Ramu! Ramu!" Cauvery had de-orbited before the cosmonaut could re-enter the spacecraft, and he had been left behind! "Can't he be saved?" Anju asked tearfully.

Meanwhile, Ramu remained calm. He hid himself against the hull of Trivikrama and soon came upon a switch which opened itself with a spark. Inside the alien world, Ramu, felt strangely at home! There were rows and rows of computers, but what absorbed him most was a detailed map etched on a panel. It was the galaxy, Andromeda, nearest to the earth. There were evidences of adaptation from man's knowledge of the solar system. The remarkable identity of data was awe-inspiring.

Ramu moved about cautiously. As soon as he stepped into a huge dome, he was surrounded by a cocoon of rays. He was pinned to the spot, so to say, and no movement was possible. He felt tired and went to sleep while leaning against a computer desk. When he woke up, the TV panels in front of him were showing strange pictures looking like electro-encealograph curves.

Meanwhile, Capt. Venkatesh decided against a meeting with the other spacecraft from the earth which he had named 'Garuda'. He could listen to astronaut Wood boasting about their space achievement in securing the slab from the alien craft. For two days he and his crew tried to cut open the slab, without success. An infra-red lamp revealed a queer arrangement of crystal-like formations on the slab. Wood radioed photos of these formations. Only the Canadian Eskimos were able to decipher them and their conclusion was startling. The alien race was offering a formula to double the human lifespan! Was Trivikrama trying to barter the slab and the formula for the human biological specimen it had earlier demanded? Was Ramu being kept as a hostage?

The Mission Control gave orders for 'Operation Rescue' and return of the slab. Capt. Wood, however, declared his intention not to give up the

prized possession. Suddenly, contrary to all instructions, the three astronauts aboard Garuda fell asleep at the same time. The crew of Cauvery as well as the scientists on the earth could only speculate over this strange interlude.

More queer signals from Trivikrama, revealed a threat if the slab was not returned: all satellites that orbited the earth and the moon would be destroyed! And it was no empty threat either. Trivikrama's rays silenced one of the weather satellites, with the result all weather forecasts went haywire. Shuttle teams from the earth could not approach the satellite for repairs, as they were repelled by ultra-violet rays.

Meanwhile, Ramu on board Trivikrama got indication through his sensors that a violent solar flare was in the making. He watched for Trivikrama's reaction. With a jerk, it started moving. Suddenly, he noticed that he himself could move about once again. He stumbled on a switch. The TV screen on one of the control panels showed a fast approaching Cauvery. When it was just a few

metres away, Ramu made a dash for freedom. Venkatesh took no chance. He hooked Ramu with a rope and pulled him inside. Anju was the happiest at the reunion.

The Mission Control ordered Cauvery to transfer the cargo of biological specimen, which a space shuttle had earlier delivered to Cauvery, to Trivikrama. In a dexterous manoeuvre, Venkatesh achieved the transfer. Trivikrama now set a time limit for the return of the slab. Garuda asked for a docking with Cauvery and wanted to know if it could also effect the transfer of the slab. Venkatesh instead advised Capt. Wood to jettison the slab, as he felt that the deadline could not be met. By the time Garuda jettisoned the slab, the alien craft had moved away! The super-perfect Trivikrama seemed to have committed a big error in calculation and missed Garuda by one-hundredth of a millisecond. The slab was dragged along by the gravitational force of the spacecraft, and along with it went a gift to extend man's life on the earth

Now read on.....

## 9. A SAFE RETURN BUT HORRORS IN STORE !

**T**HE slab continued to trail behind Trivikrama. The world's medical community was the most disappointed lot. They regretted the decision to return the slab, especially when it contained the formula for extending the life-span of man.

The flight of Trivikrama across the starlit sky was majestic. It looked like a gigantic ocean liner, rapidly going out of sight. Its endless panels of electronic gadgets made it look like a multicoloured jewel, reflecting in the brilliant sun.

The Mission Control broke the silence: "Cauvery! Prepare for de-orbit" came the message. Venkatesh hesitated. He wanted to ensure that the slab did not fall again into the hands of the other craft—Garuda.

As the preparations for the return journey began, navigator Padma got a message from Capt. Wood. He still wanted a docking with Cauvery. The first reaction was one of suspicion and disgust. Cauvery referred the request to the Mission Control. They knew that Garuda must be having at least some close-up photographs of the slab. But even if they were to dock, they would not be able to undock at will. It would only complicate the fuel mechanism of and splashdown techniques for Cauvery. It was, therefore, decided not to attempt a docking with Garuda.

The splashdown of Cauvery in the Bay of Bengal, almost within sight of Sriharikota, was witnessed by millions of people on television. The timing was perfect and, just like the first Moon heroes, Capt. Venkatesh and his crew could not step on the red carpet straightway. They had also to undergo the quarantine formalities.

When everyone else had been fully absorbed in the exciting last moments of Cauvery, navigator Padma was doing a quiet job. She carefully recorded all the messages that had emanated from Trivikrama. One of the messages, which looked important, was analysed soon after their landing. The contents chilled even the bravest.

It was a horror story of havoc wrought by the alien craft during its sojourn across the galaxies. There was a record of the destruction caused to the so-called developed civilisations elsewhere in the Universe. Technological advances made by those civilisations had resulted in misery. The roving eye of the superior intelligence had pricked the bubble of false progress. Several photographs showed how many a teeming city had been turned into deserts, looking like the surface of the moon.

A first count showed that they had destroyed a thousand of over ten thousand



civilisations, all recorded in their sophisticated gadgets, within 10,000 light years from the earth. A familiar technique employed by "them" seemed to be to hasten the self-destructive impulses of the decadent civilisations, before they could struggle to reach their average life of 6,500 years. Their sources of fuel dried up, upsetting all their "intelligent calculations". The aggressive impulses in their brain were made uncontrollable and demonic with disastrous results.

Everyone heaved a great sigh of relief that the earth had been spared from a similar fate, though some scientists were warning that it might be too early to conclude anything.

Meanwhile, Capt. Wood and his crew continued to be in orbit. As the world was preoccupied with the first mission, hardly anyone remembered the second, which needed elaborate preparations for a successful return. Unfortunately, the structure of Garuda was such that it could not dock with any of the world's shuttles. The only way of return was to splashdown, and this required an accurate determination of a narrow corridor in space.

Since the permission of the Universal Space Agency had not been obtained before Garuda soared into space, there were hardly any arrangements for its return. Some scientists even went to the extent of suggesting that as the craft had violated the accepted space laws, it should be "let to land on the moon or Mars"!

But cosmonaut Ramu spoke out. He urged the world community not to view Garuda's adventure from a narrow angle and pleaded for immediate return facilities, since the food supplies on board Garuda were fast getting depleted. His appeal worked. Computers and experts were pressed into service. The earliest available opportunity was chosen and the splashdown manoeuvres began in full swing. The return of Garuda was a tame affair.

The world-wide search for the effects of the alien visit continued. The first week yielded nothing new. On the eighth day, there was some disturbing news.

Several tiny marine beings were reported dead in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. An examination showed that they had died about a week earlier. Marine biologists started a massive hunt for similar phenomena.

It was, however, the atmospheric scientists who came out with a reason for the sudden death of the marine beings. While refining the data on the earth's atmosphere, computers had noted an unusual input of ultra-violet rays, which proved lethal to the marine beings.

In Sriharikota, the world delegates once again held a conference. They analysed the gains and losses of the space adventure. They were satisfied that the first encounter of man with a robot of another civilisation had generally ended on a happy and hopeful note.

They agreed that individual spaceships should not be allowed in future to take the initiative to meet alien robots—like Garuda had attempted. Any decision to send man's representatives should be discussed openly and the consensus honoured. Anyone breaking the rule would be denied landing facilities. The conference decided to have a detailed interview with cosmonaut Ramu by a group of experts on the complexity of Trivikrama.

But, strangely, Ramu could not remember anything. The veteran cosmonaut, who could once memorise thousands of details at one glance, simply gazed at the stars. Doctors who examined him said the dense magnetic field, which had been used to protect the spacecraft from the ultra-violet rays, might have affected his memory.

Outside the cosmodrome in Sriharikota, people from different parts of the world queued up to catch a glimpse of Ramu, the first ever man who had been to an alien world. Some brought flowers; some sang and danced in ecstasy; others cheered him and shook hands; children pinned medals on him. But Ramu sat, stone-like, staring at the ceaseless waves of the sea. He did not know why he was being so honoured!

*Mohan Sundara Rajan*

*(Concluded)*

# KAPISH



KAPISH HAS  
NOTHING TO  
DO, SO, HE  
DECIDES TO  
VISIT HIS  
FRIEND  
KASHAPU, THE  
TORTOISE



KASHAPU LIVES ON THE  
BEACH WITH HIS PARENTS  
AND THE OTHER TORTOISES.



BUT WHEN KAPISH  
GETS THERE --

STRANGE!  
NOT A  
SINGLE  
TORTOISE  
IN SIGHT!



THERE ARE  
USUALLY SO MANY  
OF THEM AROUND  
AT THIS TIME



KASHAPU!  
KASHAPU!



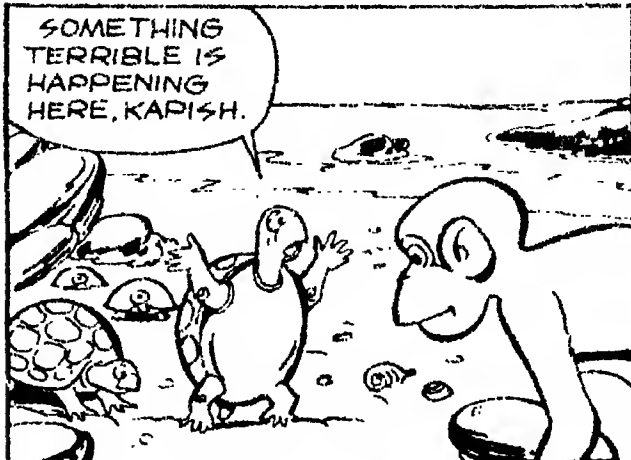
KAPISH,  
OVER  
HERE!



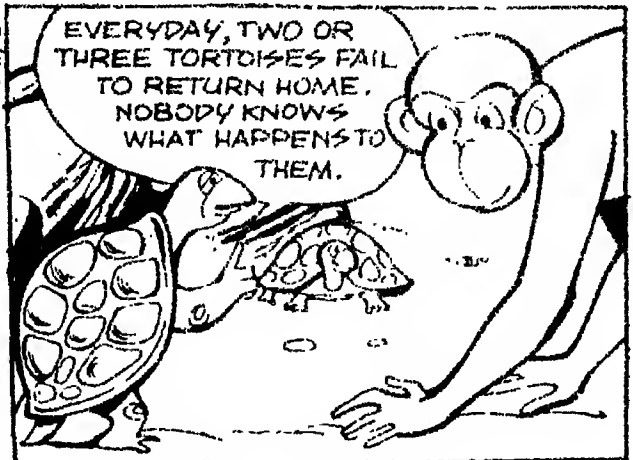
WHAT'S THE  
MATTER? WHY ARE  
YOU ALL HIDING  
HERE?

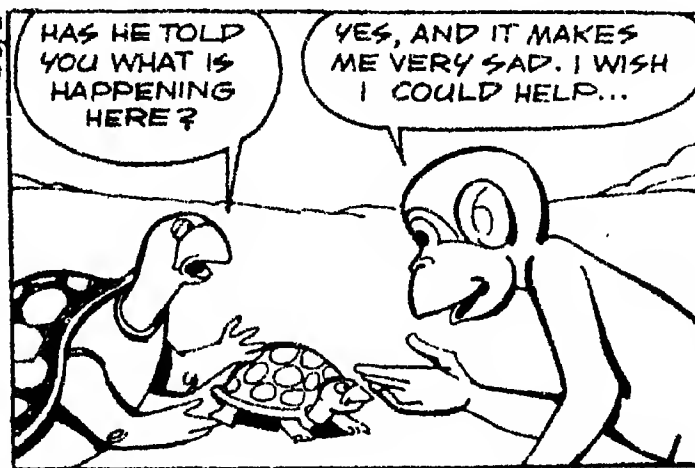
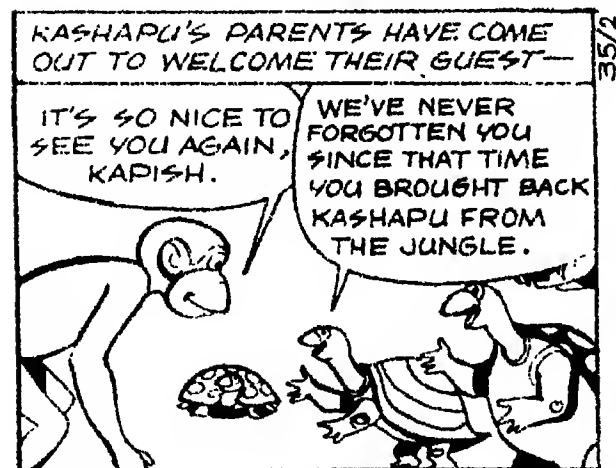
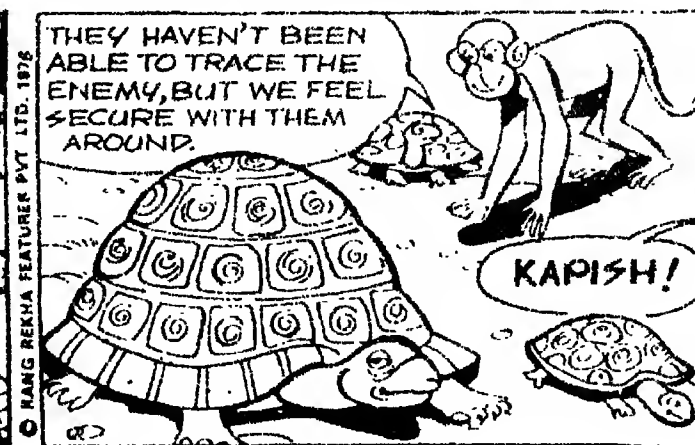
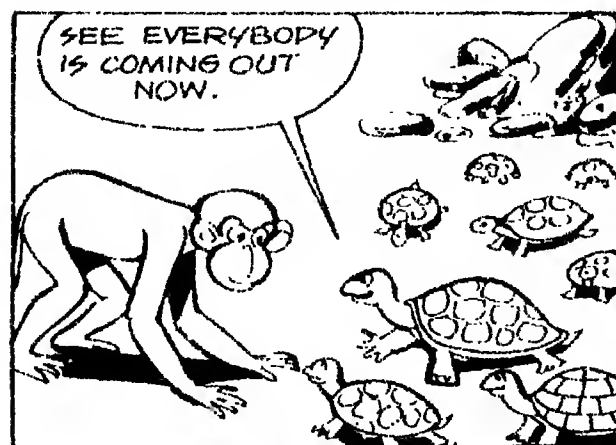
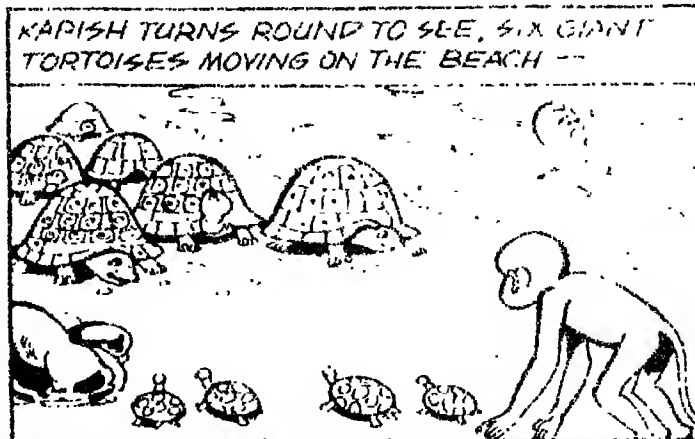
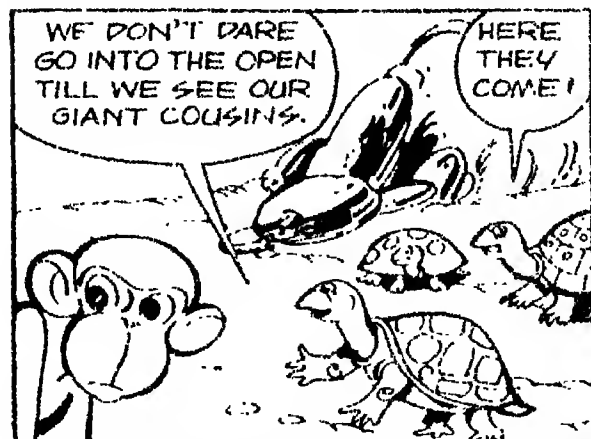
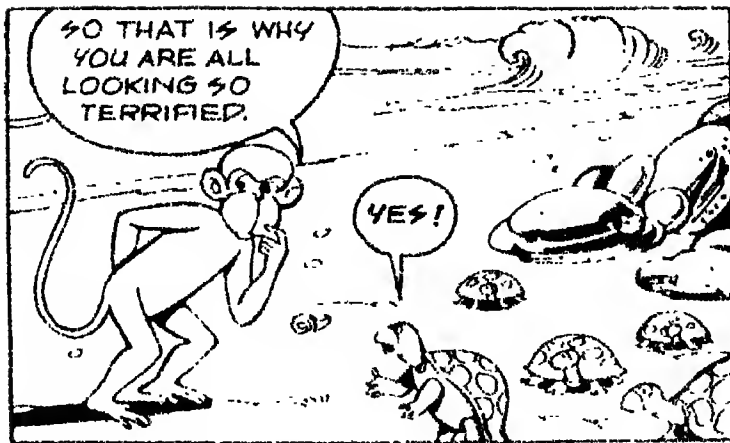


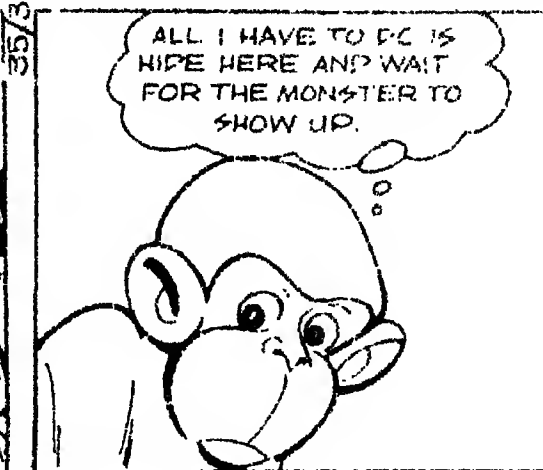
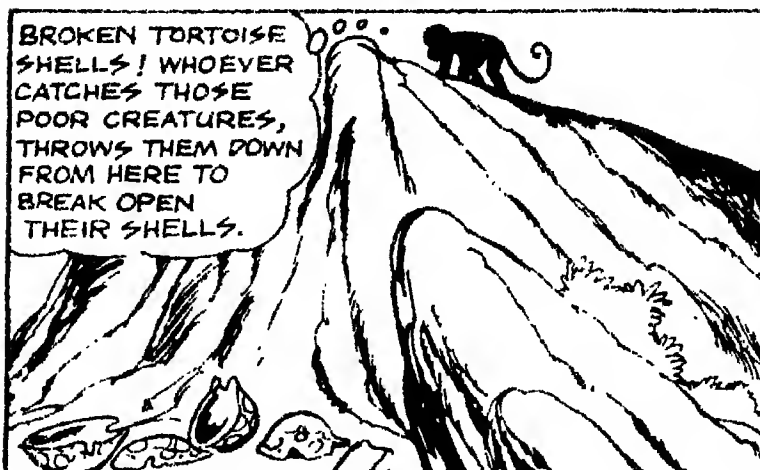
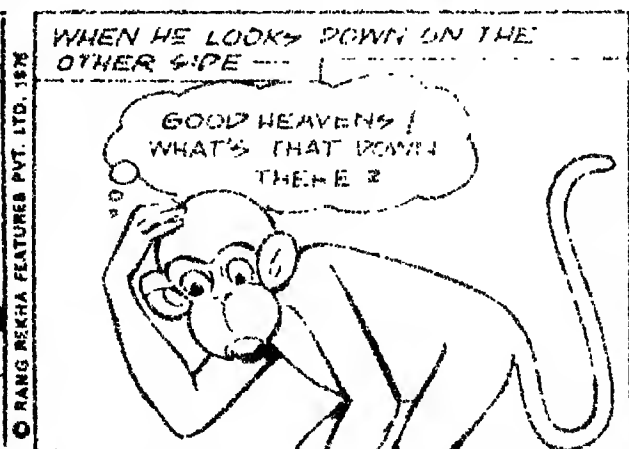
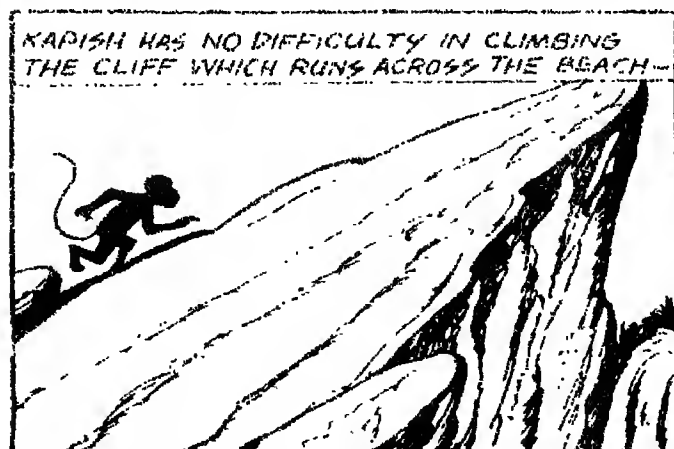
SOMETHING  
TERRIBLE IS  
HAPPENING  
HERE, KAPISH.

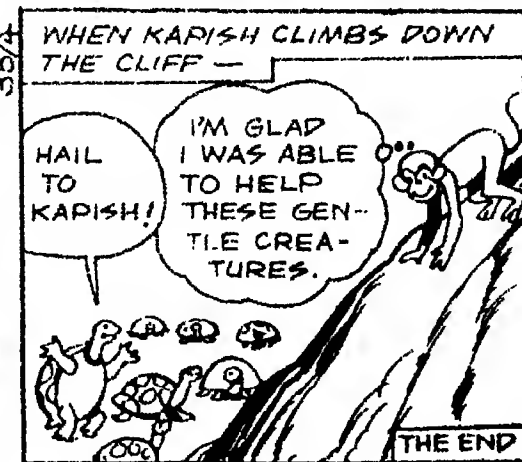
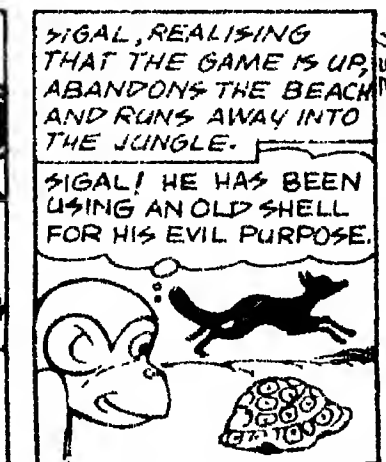
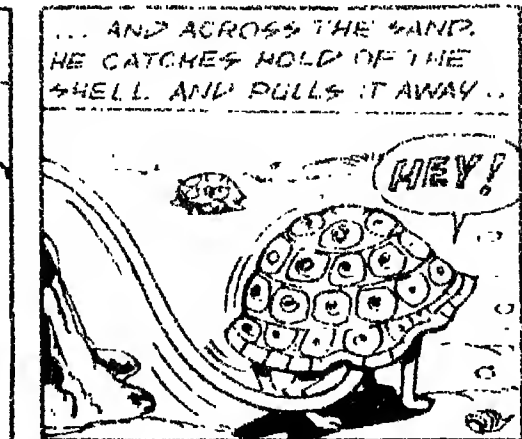
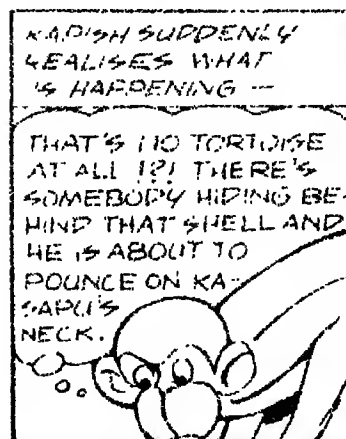
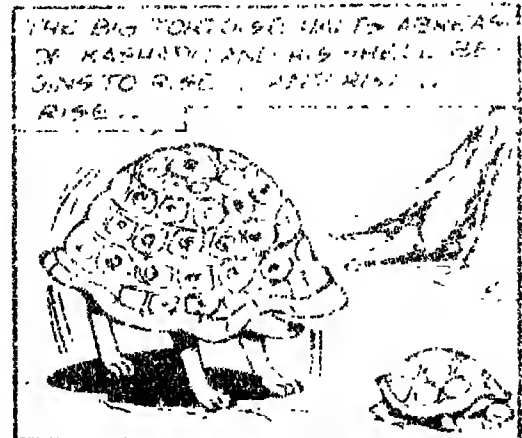
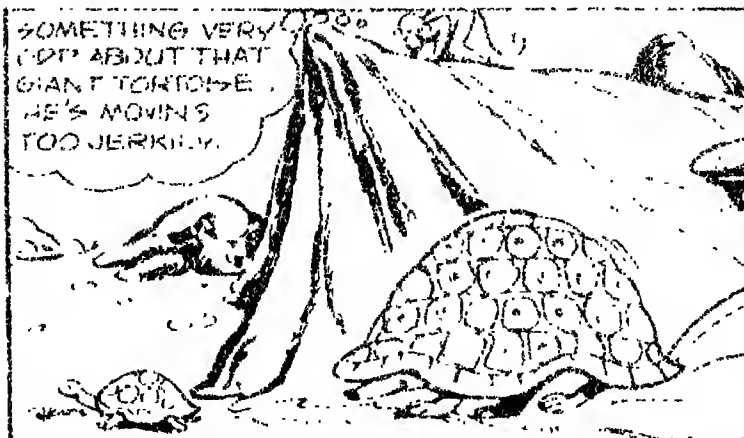


EVERYDAY, TWO OR  
THREE TORTOISES FAIL  
TO RETURN HOME.  
NOBODY KNOWS  
WHAT HAPPENS TO  
THEM.







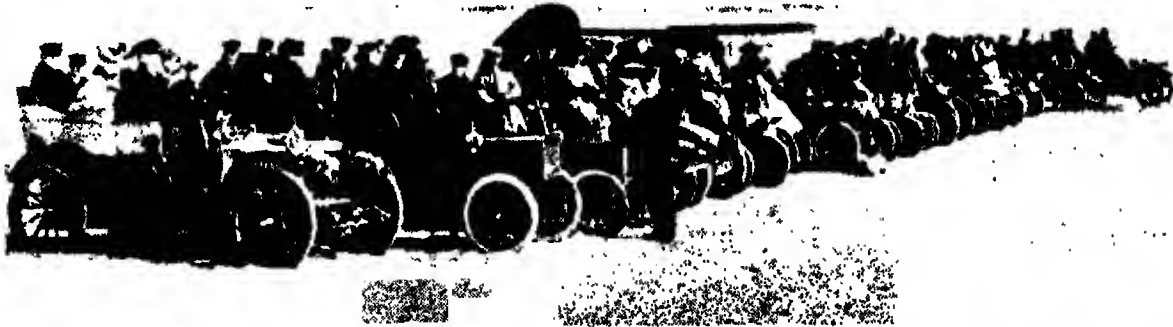


# British Drivers to the Fore

**B**Y THE late 1950s, a Grand Prix, either in Europe or in the U.S.A., had become a 'professionally efficient event. The course stretched from 300 to 500 km and the race lasted at least two hours. About a thousand people used to be involved in the organization of a race. Besides, a massive vehicle equipped like a small hospital always stood by to act as a Grand Prix hospital unit. The commander-in-chief of the whole exercise was the Clerk, who alone had the right to

stop a race. So far, such a happening has taken place only once. This happened in Britain, when a sudden cloudburst made the going especially dangerous. The timekeepers were unable to see the cars or discern their numbers. However, the discretion rests solely in the hands of the Clerk, like in Le Mans, where during a fearful race eighty persons died, yet the race continued.

The Monaco Grand Prix of 1930 distinguished itself by becoming the first in which



The Daytona Beach resort area, on Florida's coast, won international fame in the early days of the automobile, because its beach, a 23 mile (37km) stretch of hard-packed, white sand, offered a natural speedway for the automotive pioneers. These photos—the upper one taken in the early 1900s, and the lower one more than 60 years later—indicate the beach's great width which exceeds 500ft (150m) at low tide. Cars now compete in the Daytona International Speedway, the world's fastest closed race course a few miles away.

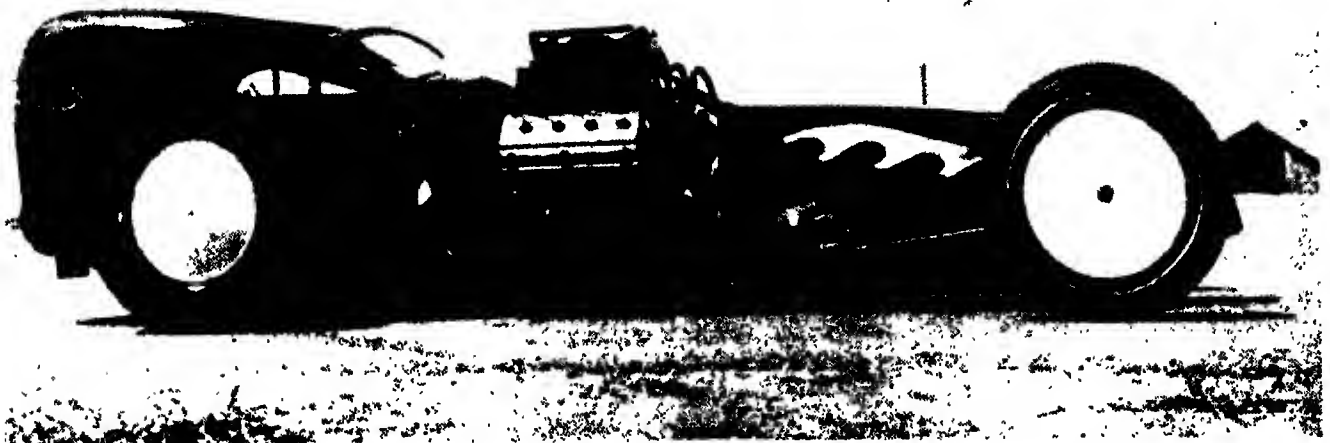


the positions at the start were determined by the drivers' timings during practice. Nowadays all Grand Prix follow this system. The best practice time earns the 'poll position'—the most advantageous position—inside for the first corner.

Modern Grand Prix Formula I cars (these are the fastest and are different from Formula II and III cars in the construction of their engines) look totally different from their prototypes at the turn of the century. The machines are long and low slung and attention is paid to getting the power developed effectively on roads. Tyres on driving wheels are very wide, the rear ones being larger in diameter than those in front. The tyres are made from chemical-rubber mixes so as to ensure good adhesion on wet or dry tracks. Aerofoils force the wheels of the car on to the road. The mechanics of Grand Prix cars are accommodated by the side of the race course. Pits are dug at some convenient straight part of the course, normally opposite the grand stand. By 1930, pit work excelled to perfection. All four tyres of a

Grand Prix car could be changed on wheels and fuel replenished in well under 60 seconds!

The Grand Prix drivers, who win the world championships, are graded drivers belonging to the organization, GDPA. And though they may drive in Formula II races as well as their own Formula I, these drivers are barred from participating in Formula III races. The main concern of the GDPA is the safety of the drivers. Before every Grand Prix race, two members of the organization walk around the course checking the safety points. In 1969, the GDPA was responsible for the cancellation of the Belgian Grand Prix because the members believed that the safety points had not been brought in line with the needs of the increasingly powerful cars. The GDPA struck again in 1970. At their insistence, the German Grand Prix was shifted from Nurburgring to Hockenheim for the same reason. The wives of racing drivers are active through an association called the Dog House Owners' Club. This organization



A typical 'Dragster' is this 'creaper' manufactured by Mailliard. It is similar to an early Bantam Austin, with a Chrysler engine mounted midway between the driver's compartment and the streamlined nose.



looks after the dependents of those drivers who were killed or injured in action on the track.

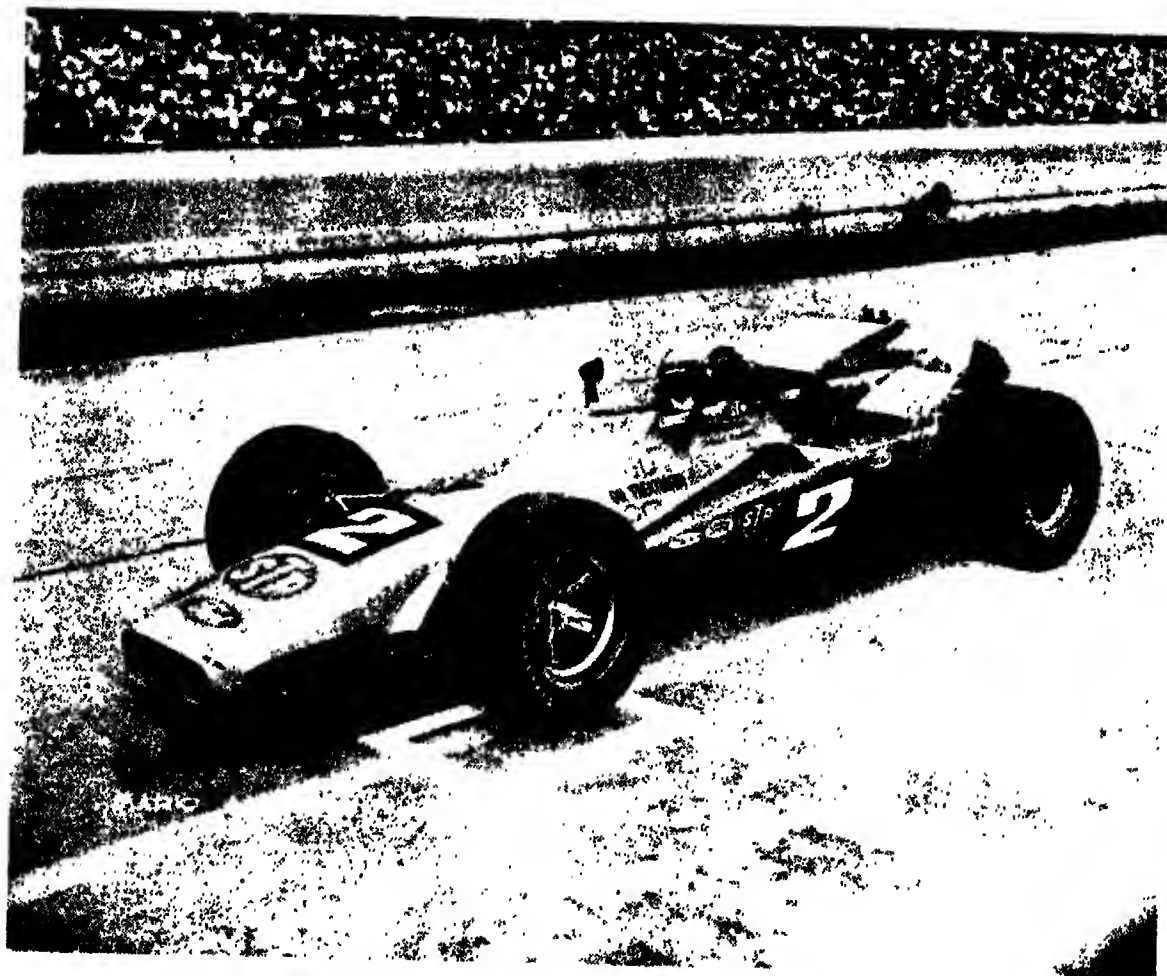
But coming back to the history of the World Championship—with the turn of the decade into the sixties, a new phenomenon sprang into the international motor racing arena. British drivers and British-made cars began winning most of the major races. Lotus, BRM, March and McLaren driven by men like Graham Hill, Jim Clark, Jackie Stewart, and John Surtees removed all competition from foreign cars. Only occasionally were Ferraris or Matras able to hold their own.

The new breed of British drivers was characterized by a certain mental toughness and a strong professional grip on their sport. Most of them had begun racing early. But Jim Clark, perhaps, was the youngest to learn driving. At the age of nine, he was adroitly manipulating his sheep-farmer

father's Austin Seven. Much later, in 1960, he joined Lotus and set off on a slide of success that soon put him on as high a shelf as Fangio and Nuvolain. He was an incredible driver with nerves of steel, for he was never affected by the conditions of the track. He won the World Championship in 1963 and 1965. Bad luck kept him from the 1967 title. And so he began the '68 season with a vengeance and with a fine victory in the first Grand Prix of the year in South Africa's Kyalami. In his Lotus-Ford, he notched up his 25th Grand Prix win, thus breaking Fangio's ten-year-old record. On 6th April the same year, he was racing in Hockenheim, Germany, when he slid off the track on an easy right hand turn and died a few minutes later.

*Rukmini Mukherjee*

*(To be concluded)*



The 1969 Indianapolis Motor Speedway winner, Mario Andretti.

# The Vow

*(A Story based on the Mahabharata)*

"I TELL you, Father, it's the most wonderful horse I've ever seen!" The eyes of the young prince shone with eagerness as he leaned on his father's arms.

"Is it?" King Shantanu had a far away look in his eyes and did not sound particularly interested.

"It runs so fast, like the lightning! It really does!" continued the prince in the same eager tone. "Do come and see it, Father."

"I'm glad you are pleased," said King Shantanu. But he did not get up.

"It would be a marvellous horse to take on the battlefield," said the prince. "Oh! do come and see it!"

"See it? No, not now," said the king in a listless voice, "I don't feel up to it, Devabrata!"

At once, the prince was all concern. "You're not ill, are you, Father," he cried in an anxious voice. "Should I send for the doctor?"

"I'm not ill, son!" said the king in a reassuring tone. "But I feel tired. I want to be alone. You go and ride that horse."

Prince Devabrata turned away, with a look of anxiety in his eyes.

King Shantanu had been behaving so strangely of late! He was unusually preoccupied and did not seem interested in anything. And yet... he had not reached the age when one is normally indifferent to worldly things! He was still quite young and at the peak of his power. Though Devabrata had been coronated the crown prince some days ago, he was only a young lad.

Young Devabrata was the light of his father's eyes and adored by the entire kingdom. He was the son of Ganga who had come down to the earth and married King Shantanu. She had gone back to heaven, leaving her little child with the king. Devabrata grew up to be an extremely accomplished young man. He had mastered each and every art necessary for a king and was already a great warrior. Parasurama, the renowned warrior, had himself taught Devabrata and had declared that there was nothing more which he could teach the young prince. "He would make a great king, some day!" Parasurama had said proudly.

King Shantanu was very happy with his son. In fact, he felt relieved at the thought that if ever

he grew too tired or frail to carry on his duties as king, Devabrata would be able to take over from him and be a greater king than himself. That was why he had insisted on crowning him as the Yuvaraja, in spite of his being so young! It had seemed the right and the most natural thing to do.

As Devabrata walked towards the royal stables, he recalled the earlier times when he and his father had been such good companions. They had shared all kinds of adventures like two comrades! King Shantanu had marvelled at his son's ability to grasp things. He seemed to be a born ruler and leader of people. How enthusiastically had he made plans for his son! How happy and eager had he been and how very proud every time Devabrata learnt something new! "Where has all this enthusiasm gone now?" Devabrata wondered. His father loved him as much as ever, no doubt, but his heart seemed elsewhere. And his mind, too. He knew King Shantanu was unhappy over something and he wondered what it was. He silently resolved to find out the cause.

Just then he looked up and saw someone riding towards the stables. It was one of the king's advisors. Devabrata's face lit up as the rider alighted from his horse and saluted him.

"I'm happy to see you," said Devabrata smiling at him. "I was about to go and look you up."

"I'm always at your service, Yuvaraja," said the king's advisor. "What is it?"

"I'm worried about father," said Devabrata simply.

"Worried about His Majesty?" said the advisor looking surprised. "But why? He is perfectly well so far as I could see."

"I'm not worried about his health," said the young prince shaking his head. "It's his mind that I'm worried about. He isn't happy."

"Oh!" said the king's advisor, opening his eyes wide. "What makes you think so?"

"He isn't like himself at all. He is listless and absent-minded and doesn't feel interested in anything," said Devabrata. "And he hardly ever speaks to me. It isn't like him!"

"And you've never asked him what is wrong?" asked the advisor, looking keenly at Devabrata.

"He says there is nothing wrong and there is

nothing the matter with him," said Devabrata looking troubled. "I sometimes wonder if....." He stopped short there.

"Yes," said the old advisor gently.

"I wonder if he is feeling lonely," said Devabrata. "I am no longer a child and I'm so busy doing and learning things all the time..."

"It would be strange if he weren't lonely," the king's advisor agreed with the prince. "Your mother left him a long time ago and he is still quite young. We've asked him many a time to remarry, but he has always brushed aside the idea."

"I wish I could see him happy again!" said Devabrata eagerly. "I would do anything, give anything for his happiness. My father has always been like god to me!"

"I'll look into this," promised the advisor, "and if there is anything which you can do, I shall tell you about it. In the meantime, try to be cheerful!"

Devabrata thanked him and went off for a ride. King Shantanu saw him ride past from his balcony, his heart warming with pride for his gallant son. 'I cannot do it,' he said wistfully to himself. 'I cannot possibly cheat Devabrata of his right to inheritance for the sake of my pleasure. It would be wrong and a grave injustice!'

King Shantanu was really unhappy and it seemed that he would never be happy again. He was in love and that love demanded a price that could not be paid. The king picked up a lotus from the gold vase, smelt it, sighed, and laid it aside. It was the same fragrance that had waylaid him the other day in the depth of the forest. He had followed it, and to his intense surprise, the source of the fragrance had turned out to be...not a flower but a beautiful girl! The girl, Satyavati, better known as Padmagandha because of her fragrance, was really a fisherman's daughter!

Such exquisite beauty in a fisherman's hut? Incredulous! the king thought at first, but he had made up his mind. If any girl could fill up the void left by Ganga and make him happy once again, it was this lotus-maiden. He had walked up to the fisherman, asking for his daughter's hand. Who, after all, could refuse King Shantanu? But....the unexpected had happened! The fisherman, though highly gratified by the honour, straightway refused to give Satyavati in marriage, unless King Shantanu gave his solemn word of honour that *her* son would be the future king!

"But how could that be?" said the king at once. "I have a son already—a great prince. No one but Devabrata can possibly be the king after me."

"Then you can't have my daughter," said the fisherman in a firm voice. "My daughter shall not be just one of the royal crowd. If she cannot be the mother of the future king, she shall not wed you at all!"

King Shantanu requested, pleaded, and implored the fisherman to reconsider his condition. How could the king do such grave injustice to the crown prince? And what would the people say? They loved their prince as much as he did!

The fisherman stood firm as a rock and refused to relent. His daughter would not play second fiddle to anyone. She and her child must be supreme to the king!

King Shantanu was too much of a gentleman to take Satyavati away by force. He left the place with a broken heart.

In a few days' time, Devabrata went to see the king's advisor once again. "Well, sir," he said impatiently, "have you been able to find out anything?"

"Yes," said the old advisor, looking straight into his eyes. "There is a girl, Satyavati, whom your father wishes to marry. But she will not have him."

"Won't have him?" cried Devabrata incredulously. "Will not have the king? Is she mad? Where does she live? I shall go and make her see sense! Imagine having the cheek to refuse the king!"

The advisor said no more. Devabrata took the directions from him and rode to the fisherman's cottage.

"I am Devabrata," he said without any preamble. "Your daughter is going to be our queen. I have come to fetch her. Where is she?"

"It's kind of you, sir," said the fisherman, "but I've already told the king that she shall not wed him unless she is given a proper position."

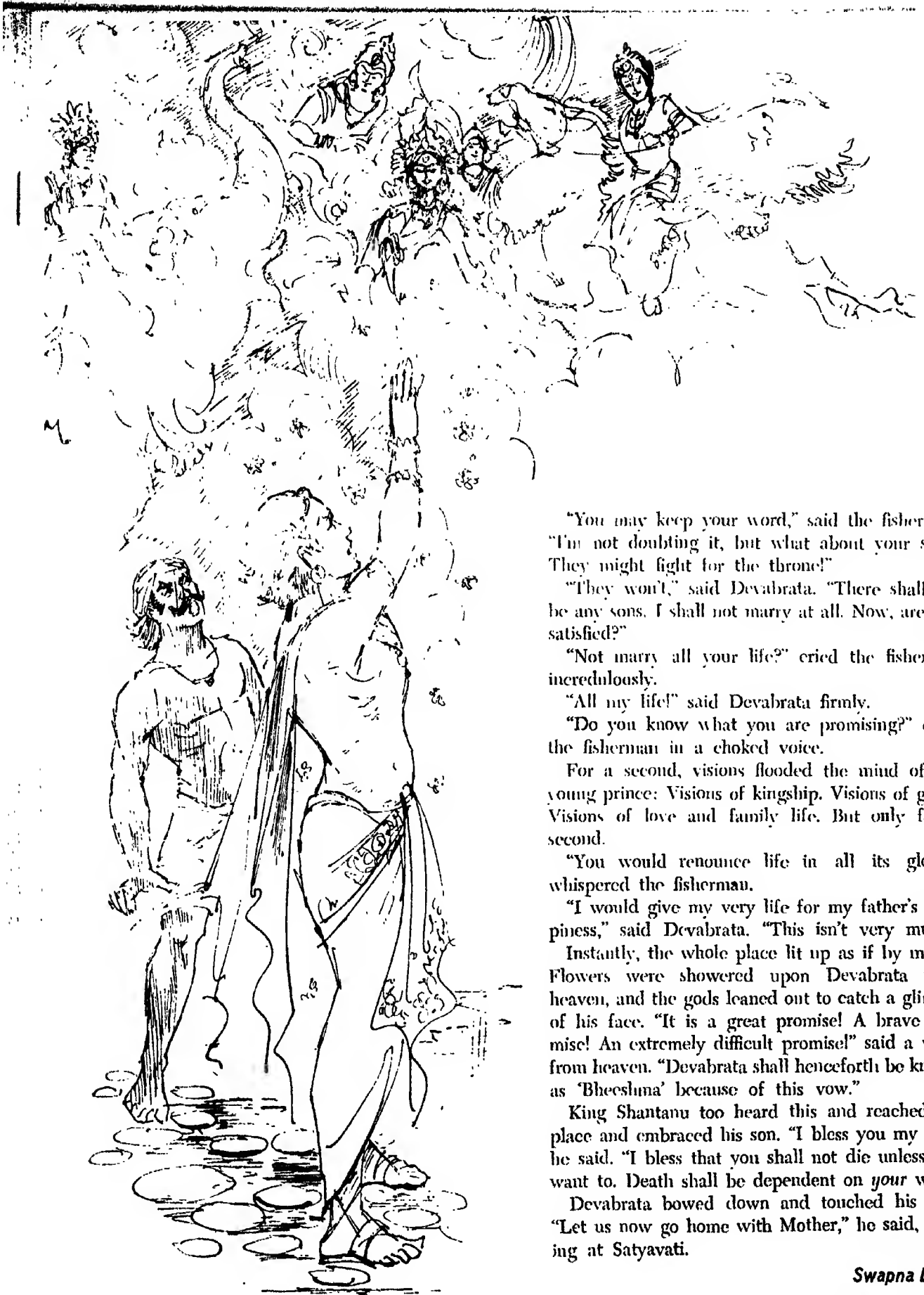
"What do you mean?" asked Devabrata. "Please talk to me frankly."

"I'll tell you what I mean," said the fisherman. "My daughter shall not marry the king unless he promises that the son born to her shall be the king."

"Is that all?" said Devabrata looking relieved. "Well, there is no need to bring my father into all this. I promise you, here and now, that the son born to your daughter shall be the king. I shall never claim my father's throne!"

"Do you mean it?" cried the fisherman in a disbelieving voice. "You'd give up the throne—your rightful heritage—just like that?"

"I would, since that is what you wish," said Devabrata in a voice that left no room for doubt.



"You may keep your word," said the fisherman. "I'm not doubting it, but what about your sons? They might fight for the throne!"

"They won't," said Devabrata. "There shall not be any sons. I shall not marry at all. Now, are you satisfied?"

"Not marry all your life?" cried the fisherman incredulously.

"All my life!" said Devabrata firmly.

"Do you know what you are promising?" cried the fisherman in a choked voice.

For a second, visions flooded the mind of the young prince: Visions of kingship. Visions of glory. Visions of love and family life. But only for a second.

"You would renounce life in all its glory?" whispered the fisherman.

"I would give my very life for my father's happiness," said Devabrata. "This isn't very much!"

Instantly, the whole place lit up as if by magic. Flowers were showered upon Devabrata from heaven, and the gods leaned out to catch a glimpse of his face. "It is a great promise! A brave promise! An extremely difficult promise!" said a voice from heaven. "Devabrata shall henceforth be known as 'Bheeshma' because of this vow."

King Shantanu too heard this and reached the place and embraced his son. "I bless you my son," he said. "I bless that you shall not die unless you want to. Death shall be dependent on *your* wish."

Devabrata bowed down and touched his feet. "Let us now go home with Mother," he said, smiling at Satyawati.

**Swapna Dutta**



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# WICKED VIKS

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ONE very rainy morning, Vikram and Vaishali could not think of anything to do. A full day of the summer vacation wasted, they thought. Mama had made it quite clear that they were not to go out of the house. No, not even to Chiki's house, or to Shobby's or anyone else's. And they dare not disobey. Not after what had happened yesterday.

Yesterday had been bright and sunny. So Viks and Vaishu thought they ought to cool themselves a bit. They had wheeled out their old pram, lying unused, since Vaishu was a baby. Once in the garden, they had taken off its removable wheels, and with a thud pushed it into the pond! Quickly, they too had got in, and with shouts of glee, they boated around the pond.

But, oh dear! The heavy pram soon filled with water. And there, at the bottom of the pond with the pram, were Viks and Vaishu, shouting for mania. One look at the ruined pram, and the expression on mama's face was enough to tell them, it was bedtime for the rest of the day.

But, this morning was different. Big, black clouds and rain all morning had called for a heavy breakfast of piping hot potato, 'Pohas'! Mummy had even put a little coffee in their milk. After that, they had settled themselves at the hall window blowing soap bubbles. It was fun watching the little bubbles trying to dodge the raindrops. They changed their colours from green to gold, to pink to blue before POP they went.

"I am quite sick of making bubbles. I think I'll service all my cars and trucks," declared Viks, suddenly.

"Oh, that's a good idea," said Vaishu. "Dada'll be a garage man, and I'll stay home, and cook and clean along with my dolls."

She took out her favourite doll, Chini, the doll's house, her tiny gas cylinder with the cooking range, and put some rice and dal in the two dishes of the tiny pressure cooker, and pretended Chini was going to cook them.

She propped Chini on a doll's house chair and put a tiny spoon into her hand. Vaishu herself, got busy making a pudding. She did not notice Chini had fallen forward in her chair.

Chini's legs and hands were made of

straw and covered with pink cloth. Even her body was stuffed with straw and cotton. Somewhere, in her tummy, was a little bleeper that said, 'Maah, maah', rather like a goat. Because, she had a very sweet face, Vaishu had named her Chini (sugar).

After some time, Vaishali pretended that the wec pressure cooker was whistling, like mama's pressure cooker did, when the rice and dal were cooked. She turned to tell Chini to switch off the make-believe gas. But, when she turned, she let out a scream, "Dada", she called to Viks, "Dada, come quick with the ambulance, there is an emergency."

"Wheeee, wheeee", went the mini-ambulance's whistle, while its light flashed red signals. Vikram was playing his favourite role now—that of driver, and Doctor Viks Wicked Vikram.

"I'm Dr. Viks Wicked Vikram. Where is the patient?" gushed Vikram in one breath.

"Oh, doctor, I'm so glad you're here, it's my poor Chini. She was quite well this morning, but I just now found her slumped in her chair. She doesn't even speak to me." Vaishali wrung her hands, mimicking Auntie Jha next door.

"Come, ma'am, we'll have her smiling before long" said Dr. Viks. He laid Chini on the doll's house bed, and prodded her tummy gently with his forefinger. Then in a stern voice he said, "This is an emergency, ma'am. You'll have to be very, very brave and help me in the operation that I'll perform on your beloved doll. . . . ah, I mean on the patient."

"An operation? Oh dear, my poor little Chini. . . . Dada, I'm telling you, if you do anything to Chini, I'll tell mama," said Vaishu forgetting the game for a minute.

"Go, you dirty sneak, go tell mama, then I won't repair Chini's 'Maah Maah'," cried Viks.

"Oh, Dr. Viks Vikram, can you really do that?" asked Vaishali.

"Of course, will you help me?"

"Yes, doc," came the quick reply.

"Ah, ready then. Scissors, Nurse."

"Sc. . . . sciss. . . . Scissors, sir," said Nurse Vaishali. "I'll hit you, if you can't stitch

Chini up again," she added.

"Shoo—pliers," said Dr. Viks Vikram.

"Pliers! What for?"

"To twist the wire in her bleeper, you fool, otherwise how will the 'Maah' sound come? Ah, I mean, ma'am I just told you Chini has to have her app. . . . appendix removed," said Dr. Viks W. Vikram.

"Yes, of course, Doc," said Vaishu.

'Maah', came a voice, 'Maah, Maah, Maah'.

"Hey, Dr. Viks W. Vikram, you've fixed her. You've actually fixed her, you've actually fixed her!" cried Vaishu forgetting she was the nurse.

"Of course, ma'am, but would you like to sew her up now?" asked Vikram wickedly.

"You know I can't stitch very well, Dada. Now you jolly well do it," wailed Vaishali.

"Okay, okay, cry baby we'll both try it. Here thread the needle," said Vikram.

They were both so busy threading the needle that they nearly jumped out of their skins when mama's voice asked, "What are you two kids doing so quietly? It's stopped raining outside. Come and see the rainbow."

"Oh, mama," cried Vaishu, "Chini has to be stitched up."

"Chini has to be stitched up? What are you talking about, Vaishu?" asked mummy.

"Oh," replied Dr. Viks Wicked Vikram proudly, "I have just done an appendisitis operation on Chini and she cries perfectly well now."

"Good heavens," replied mama. "You children are really impossible. Give me the thread and needle, Vaishu. I suppose I'll have to complete Dr. Wicked Vikram's big operation."

And before they knew it, Chini's cloth skin had been sewed up as good as new in mummy's tiny, neat stitches. In fact, Chini was feeling so good, that in her 'Maah Maah' language, she invited mama, Dr. Viks, and Nurse Vaishali to a lunch of make-believe rice and dal, to be followed by a pudding called 'Cake, Biscuits and Pine-apple Pieces.'

*Vaijayanti Savant*





## All the Way to Long Ago

SUDHIR and I stepped off the cream-and-blue bus at Bhim Tal. We pushed our way through the tight little bunch of porters and took the first road that led away from the bus stand. I went swiftly ahead. Sudhir followed at a trot, and it was some time before he caught up with me. We found a wooden bench in the shade of an old oak tree and slumped into it. I was in no mood to talk. And Sudhir, good friend that he was, waited patiently for me to break the silence.

"This is not the Bhim Tal that I remember," I said at last.

"No," returned Sudhir. "From the yarns you've been spinning at college, I thought Bhim Tal was little more than a hamlet in the hills."

"It was. I'm telling you it was," I said confidently. "And a hamlet it would have remained too, but for the fact that someone from these parts became a minister. The first thing that he did was to develop his native place. At least that's what a man in the bus told me."

"Sensible fellow. The minister, I mean," said Sudhir. "Tell you what, Rakesh. Let's go round and enjoy ourselves. Accept this

place for what it is right now. Why look for things that are gone?"

I did not argue the point. And yet I could not forget the Bhim Tal of long ago. I couldn't forget that the bus stand had once been a patch of green where wild roses bloomed in big thickets in spring. Nor could I forget that the dark and mysterious rhododendrons were gone and it hurt to see the buildings that had taken their place.

A little later, Sudhir and I got up and took the road again. I did not really know the way, but trusted my memory to guide us to the cottage where I had spent a summer as a small kid. There had been six cottages in all. They belonged to the same person but did not stand close to one another. In fact, they were dotted all over the sunny face of a hill, so that you had to hunt for them. Cottage No. 1 was built on the other side of a little ravine. You never suspected it was there till you bumped into the gate. Cottage No. 2 was in a dell beyond, surrounded by apricot trees. As for our cottage, well. . . .

Sudhir interrupted my thoughts. "Where do we turn?"

I stared around me. There were several houses by the side of the road. But the Bhim Tal I remembered had very few houses to boast of. Our landmarks used to be trees overhanging the little mountain paths. "I'm afraid we're lost," I confessed to Sudhir.

In the end, we saw a man walking down the road with a shopping bag in either hand. We stopped him and asked the way to Col. Rai's cottages. He looked hard at us. "Col. Rai has been dead a few years," he said. "Had a fall from his horse. His wife left soon after. Couldn't bear to stay alone."

"And the six cottages?"

"Ah those? You remember Col. Rai had a daughter? She came and sold the entire property to the government."

He told us the way to the nearest cottage. We thanked him and trudged on, my heart heavier than before. I knew I was being foolish. Things must change, people as well as places. How could Bhim Tal be just the same as before? Then, why this feeling of being let down?

Cottage No. 6 had been my home in that bygone summer. It was built on a slight

elevation, overlooking the road. There were two gates, a little portico and three spacious bedrooms. A comfortable place, for sure. But the garden—it was a real treasure, overgrown with thickets of wild raspberry and shaded by big walnut trees.

We found the cottage, but the walnut trees were gone. And the portico carried an ugly board, proclaiming some office or the other. For a long time, Sudhir and I sat on a culvert, with our backs to the whole scene. The ravens called sadly in the pines overhead and, from somewhere close at hand, the whine of a sawmill rose and filled the air.

Finally, Sudhir said he could do with a bite and we found our way to the marketplace. Gone was the tea shop that I remembered, with the rough planks that passed for seats. Here was *smumica* at its glossiest, staring back at us from a roadside cafe. Sudhir gave the order while I looked around. There were shops and more shops and, way beyond them, rose the billboard of a cinema. It was no use; Bhim Tal had nothing, absolutely nothing left of the long ago.

The afternoon was wearing on. We had to be back at Naini Tal by nightfall and push off to Delhi the very next day. Our holiday was over. "Shouldn't we be catching a bus now?" I asked.

Sudhir thumped me on the back. "Here, get me some lozenges. They help when the bus goes round and round."

I made for the nearest general merchant's, upped two steps, and just stood there, staring. . . . That man behind the counter, surely it was Ram Dayal? Every bit as I remembered him from the days gone by. Middle-aged. Short and plump. With an open face that was good to see. . . .

And then it happened: everything was the same again. I was a little boy. And there was Ram Dayal, spinning a top from floor to table to palm to floor again. Ram Dayal whistling. Ram Dayal telling me ghost stories by the light of a hurricane lamp. . . . For a moment I gazed my fill at the face behind the counter. And then, smiling for sheer happiness, I hurried forward to meet the son of Ram Dayal, my friend of long ago.

Pratibha Nath

# TELEVISION THROUGH TELEPHONE

THE following day I went to Roy the Mystic and told him how the simple trick had mystified my brother-in-law and his guests, all highly educated, intelligent, and well-placed people, and how they had become convinced that — to put it in Mr. Chowdhuri's words — "Roy the Mystic is not only a master of Magic based on clever trickery. *He also possesses genuine powers of Telepathy which is really supernatural.*"

Roy the Mystic laughed and said, "So you have seen for yourself how a simple deceptive trick can pass as a real supernatural feat. I would like you to explain to them, I mean your brother-in-law and his guests who were mystified by my sham telepathy, how they were fooled. Not right now, but in due course!"

"But it is a beautiful secret," I protested. "What is the good of giving it away to people who are not magicians?"

"The good is that they will then become wiser and, in future, will think twice before accepting anything as supernatural simply because they cannot explain it," said the master magician. "We magicians perform fake miracles to *entertain* people. On the stage we *pretend* we are performing genuine miracles, for half the fun is lost if we declare that we are not performing real magic. But let us return to the telephone trick we jointly performed yesterday. You can also perform the same trick in a different way which is equally excellent and very mystifying. Yesterday it was *absolutely necessary* for you to go to the phone. But in this second method, *you do not have to go to the phone at all*. Anyone of the spectators chooses any card from the pack, without any chance of your influencing his choice in any way. This freely chosen card is placed before you and you concentrate on it. You say you have a friend to whom you will telepathically transfer the picture of this card. You give your spectators the name of your friend and his telephone number. They dial the number themselves, get your friend on the phone, explain to him the experiment you are having at this end, and ask him the name of the

card you are concentrating upon. Your friend at the other end makes a little fuss for a while, but at last correctly names the card. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Splendidly wonderful," I said. "But how can it be done?"

"The effect is great, of course, if you can act dramatically enough," said Roy the Mystic. "But the secret is ridiculously simple. Your spectators do not know the real name of the friend whom you ask them to ring up."

"They do not?" I asked.

"It doesn't matter what your friend's name is," said Roy the Mystic. "As previously instructed by you, he waits, at his end, near the phone. *The name by which he is called on the phone gives him the clue to the name of the card the spectator has chosen.* He has a list of 52 different names; against each name is written the name of a different card. As soon as he is called by a particular name on the phone, he looks at the list and finds out the name of the card written against that particular name! He simply names that card through the phone. At your end, when the card finally chosen is placed before you, you can at once know, *if you have been able to memorize the full list thoroughly well*, what name stands against that card, and you can give that name to the spectator to call on the phone. But if you are not quite sure of your memory, you can open your pocket notebook on the pretext of seeing the phone number (which you really already know well enough) and consult the list written in the notebook. The best plan is to have four vertical lines for the four suits: Clubs, Hearts, Spades, and Diamonds. In presenting the SECOND SIGHT experiment in my programme I, along with my assistant, had to memorize thoroughly a very large code-system. Memorizing the list of 52 cards with their corresponding personal names should not be difficult for one who aspires to be an artist at mystification."

"I think this is also one of the finest tricks in which the telephone is used," I said.

"Yes," said Roy the Mystic. "I fully agree with you, because the idea is not of my own invention."

But I have a sudden brainwave. When will there be another party at the Chowdhuris?"

"Next Sunday," I said. "And a cards session too after lunch, as usual."

"If you like, you can stun your brother-in-law and his guests with another, and more astonishing stunt," said the magician. "Yesterday you gave them a convincing evidence of Mental Telepathy. Next Sunday, you can give them an evidence of *Television through Telephone!*"

He explained his brainwave to me. I noted his instructions enthusiastically and promised to carry them out faithfully in full detail.

Next Sunday, I managed to be at my brother-in-law's house again. After breakfast, I first rang him up and told him to expect me for lunch, assuring him that I would reach his place well in advance.

I kept my word. While my cousin remained busy in the kitchen preparing our lunch, and brother-in-law Chowdhuri went out to buy sweets for us, I passed my time in the parlour with a pack of cards.

Lunch over, the session started. After a few games, I made use of a short respite and said, "Last Sunday you witnessed Roy the Mystic's wonderful power of Mental Telepathy. Today, right now, you can witness, if you like, his more astonishing power of Mental Television!"

Everybody became excited at the prospect of witnessing another miracle by Roy the Mystic.

The pack was thoroughly shuffled by a guest and another selected a card casually and kept it face down on the table (so that none of us could see the card and think of it, thereby giving Roy the Mystic a chance of knowing the card even telepathically). I then rang him up. He was then resting at home, and responded.

I explained to him that we had made a random selection of a card from a shuffled pack and none of us, not even the person who picked it, had seen the card. I asked whether he would, if we placed the card face down on the mouthpiece of the phone for half-a-minute, be able to *see the card through the phone*.

After that I handed the receiver to the selector of the card and asked him to place the card on the mouthpiece, which he did. Looking at the watch for half-a-minute to pass, I asked the selector to talk to Roy the Mystic and ask whether he had been able to see the card. He asked Roy and then told us: "He says he has been able to see the card. It is the Queen of Hearts."

None of us had seen the face of the card selected. The selector himself now turned it face up.

It was the QUEEN OF HEARTS!

Everybody was amazed, excluding myself. I silently 'laughed in my sleeve' at this end, while Roy the Mystic was surely laughing similarly at the other end.

Ajit Krishna Basu

# maxan

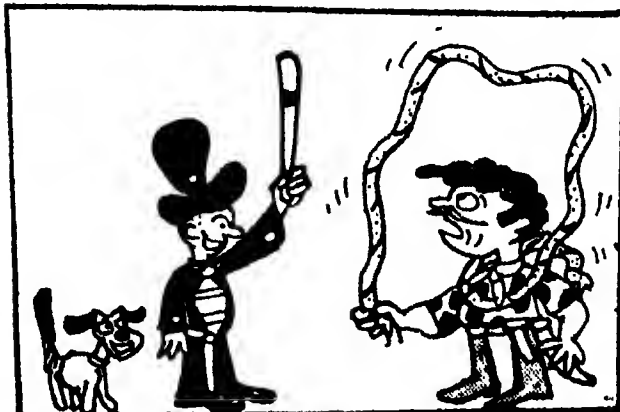
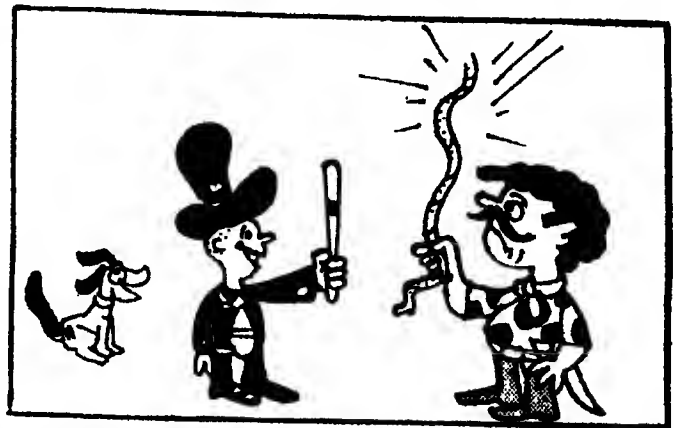
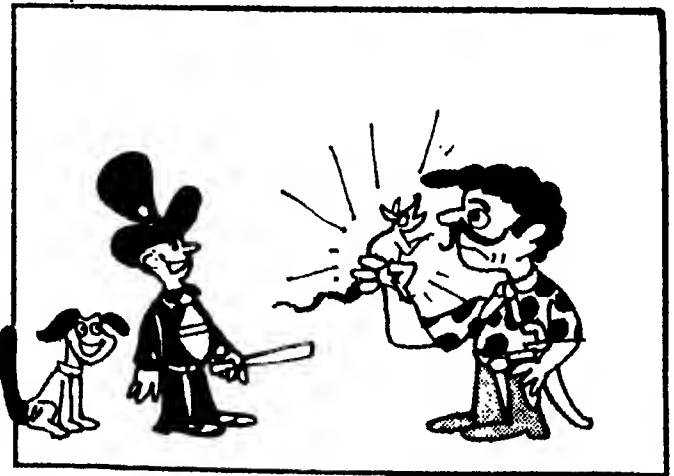


# THE MAGICIAN



BY  
MONAYE:

( Turn over ,



# ICE-CREAM TIME



THERE was a loud pitter-patter of running feet, outside on the gravel path. A thud, a whooping hooray, and peals of merry laughter, wafted through the dining room window. The noise outside got louder and louder. Chintu's father, got up hastily from his breakfast and shut the window.

"What's the matter?" enquired Chintu's mother, carrying a pot of coffee into the dining room.

"Well, Meetha's back from Mussoorie! Chintu and he are in the midst of a reunion," said Chintu's father, a quiet sort of man, who liked to enjoy his breakfast in peace.

"Oh, yes! Meetha was expected back this morning," said Chintu's mother with a smile.

Meetha, was Chintu's closest friend and lived in the adjoining house. The two, both about ten years old, quite often conversed from their bedroom window. Their talk, frequently, led to arguments. And on such occasions, they could be seen leaning out of their windows, and clenching their fists at each other. Their mothers had to intervene lest they fell off in their excitement. But, such quarrels never lasted very long. Soon after a fight, they would be sharing chocolates or playing games together.

Chintu's father was still sipping his coffee, when the dining room door opened with a bang. Meetha and Chintu rushed in, their faces aglow with excitement.

"Good morning. I am back," announced Meetha.

"He has brought lots of red cherries for us, mama," Chintu brandished a big bag of cherries.

"That's very nice, I love cherries," said Chintu's mother. "Did you enjoy your trip, Meetha?" she asked.

Chintu answered for Meetha.

"Yes, mummy, he did! Don't you see how red he looks?"

"Tanned, my dear!" corrected Chintu's father. "When you stay out too much in the sun, as one does at hill stations, the skin gets brownish."

"But he looks red!" protested Chintu. "And it's not because of the sun, Papa, it's because he ate dozens of red cherries every day," he added, while himself swallowing a handful of cherries.

Meetha, least interested in the discussion on his complexion, had in the meantime picked up a buttered toast, through sheer force of habit, and was munching it contentedly.

"I think both of you should stop arguing and eating," interrupted Chintu's father, "and, Meetha, tell your parents that Chintu and his mother are going tomorrow, to purchase school books for the next term. If they allow you, you can go with them for your books too!"

The two boys clapped their hands. The prospect of a trip to the market was exciting. The bookshop owner, Mr. Varma, was

a great favourite of theirs. He always gave them chocolates.

The next day, Chintu and Meetha, excited and happy, accompanied Chintu's mother to the market.

"I am very thirsty!" announced Meetha, as they neared the bazaar.

"I think, I am too," said Chintu.

"Either you are, or you are not. Decide one thing, and stop thinking," said Meetha.

"How can I stop thinking? I have got a brain. I am not like you! You are... what do you call boys without brains, mama?" Chintu asked his mother.

She was thankful that Chintu didn't know the word. It would have led to a fight between him and Meetha.

"Hey, both of you shut up. And remember, if you two behave properly, I will get you a real good cold drink on our way back," she told them.

"If we have to behave properly, we should be given ice-cream," demanded Chintu, always a great one for bargaining.

Once they reached the bookshop, Chintu and Meetha rushed in shouting, "Here we come, Mr. Varma. We want new books."

"Hullo, Chintu, Meetha! So both of you are back again." Mr. Varma smiled at the boys.

The boys quickly clambered into chairs nearest to Mr. Varma and peered at the pencils and rubbers inside the counter.

"What colour would you like for your rubbers this time?" enquired Mr. Varma.

This was a standard question, which he asked the boys whenever they visited his shop. And before they could make their choice, Mr. Varma would offer them chocolates. But today, he didn't bring out chocolates from under the counter.

"Have you forgotten about them?" Meetha tried to goad Mr. Varma's memory.

"By them, he means the chocolates," Chintu was more direct.

The chocolates were quickly brought.

Satisfied with a large bite of his Five Star, Chintu got back to the topic of rubbers. "I want a rubber that smells of oranges," he said.

"And I want my rubber to smell like mangoes," Meetha stated his choice.



"There's no rubber that smells of mangoes," said Mr Varma.

"Why not?" asked Chintu and Meetha together.

"O.K. Then I will have a rubber that smells of bananas", Meetha suggested an alternative.

Chintu liked the idea. He said, "I will have the same."

"No, you can't!" protested Meetha. "I thought of it first. You can't have it now."

"I shall have nothing, but a banana smelling rubber," Chintu stamped his feet on

"Remember, one who behaves gets an ice-cream," said Chintu's mother loudly.

"Did you hear that, boys!" exclaimed an exasperated Mr. Varma.

Complete silence followed. Both the boys sat down in their chairs, pushed back their hair, and flashed big grins.

"Banana flavoured ice-cream for me please, mama," Chintu said very politely.

"Me too, please!" whispered Meetha, now on his best behaviour.

"No longer afraid of 'intimating' your friend, Meetha," chuckled Mr. Varma.



the floor.

"Why are you always intimating me?" Meetha shouted.

"You mean why does he imitate you, my dear," Chintu's mother corrected Meetha.

But the boys were too worked up to hear her. Chintu was loudly banging the floor with both his feet, and repeating at the top of his voice "I will, I will. . . ."

Meetha, had begun to beat the counter with clenched fists, and shaking his head vigorously was chanting. "No, no no."

"Well, all ice-creams are ice-cream, you know," Chintu defended his friend.

"Yes, they are all the same. Nice, sweet, cold. And they are so deli. . . .", Meetha slurped, and quickly got off his chair.

"Oh. they are so deli. . . .", Chintu too, jumped off his seat, unable to resist the thought of the ice-cream.

Both of them caught hold of Chintu's mother's hands, and forcibly marched her out to the ice-cream shop.

Vijay Dutt

# THE YOUNG WORLD OF ENTERTAINING



## THE GLEE CLUB

**I**F YOU walk down the slope that leads to the St. Xavier's School (Junior School) building any Friday afternoon around 3 o'clock, you will hear distant sounds of music. If you follow the sounds, you will walk up to the stairs of the building, and you will find the music becoming more and more fascinating... you may then know what made the children of Hamelin follow the Pied Piper. The music seems to hold some sort of promise and hope; the glad voices seem to echo an unquenchable zest for life. By the time you reach the top floor, where the music is being born, you will feel like singing along, you wish you knew the words and the tune. Though the music is so loud, you can't hear yourself speak (no, you don't have laryngitis), you won't mind the amplitude... because it's fantastic. It's the GLEE CLUB!

Now, the Glee Club is, to put it in a nutshell, the Junior School choir of St. Xavier's School, Delhi. Mr. Param Vir, the famous music director, about whom you must have read a number of times in *Children's World* earlier, is in charge of the Club. Right now there are about thirty boys in the Glee Club.

I had been involved with the Glee Club for a long time before I actually attended a session. I

had helped write out words for songs; I had heard them being patiently practised. I had even picked up some of the songs and tried to sing along (I had promptly been shut up) once when I sat outside the audio-visual room on a ping-pong table and listened to the Glee Club learning a new song. I had heard funny anecdotes, of little sparrows popping into the AV room (where, incidentally, the Glee Club sessions are held) and disturbing the whole class by deciding to join in; of ping-pong balls and how they were used to shoo the birdies away.....

And here it was, the real live Glee Club. There were two boys in the corridor who unperturbedly told me they had been sent out for misbehaving. "Don't worry," said one with supreme self-confidence, "he'll call us back in." 'He', of course, was Mr. Param Vir, or Sir PV as all the boys call him and which, therefore, is his proper name.

We went in and I was somewhat cryptically announced as someone from the Welfare Society of India (Joke? Or has CW changed its name without telling me?) The lesson (if it really *could* be a lesson) continued, and I listened, enchanted. There was a larger crowd than usual, a solo singer from the Senior School told me. Practice was on for the Xavier's Parent-Teacher Association meet

and apart from the Glee Club boys, there was a Senior School choir and special solo singers. There were more musicians, too...three guitarists and a drummer, apart from Sir PV at the piano. At a normal Glee Club meet, there are just the thirty-odd Glee Club members and Sir PV at the piano.

There were two things which struck me very forcefully about the Glee Club:

First of all, of course, there is the singing itself. The boys are 'beautiful, just beautiful'. Normally, very loud music has a depressing effect on its melody — especially if you like soft music best. For the first time, I heard loud, beautiful music (of course, the St. Xavier's School stage performances, like the *Mikado* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, were loud and beautiful, but the loudness didn't really strike you because the auditorium was so big). And loudness isn't all...the boys sing as though they are born to do nothing else. When they sing a glad song, like 'How come' from *Tom Sawyer*, you could laugh out of sheer joy just listening to them; when they sing the heart-rending 'Don't cry for me, Argentina' from the opera *Evita*, you could weep. Now their voices soar with 'Happiness Is...'; now they breathe softly in Latin verse, 'Save regina....' How do they do it? Practice isn't *all*....it's dedication and real talent that does it....that makes you follow the music five floors up, that makes you want to sing along.

I mentioned earlier that I had once sat on a ping-pong table and listened to the Glee Club learn a new song. The song was 'The River Song' from *Tom Sawyer* (the opening song, in case any of you saw the movie when it came to Delhi two years ago). First of all, Sir PV dictated the words, and when that was over, the singing began. The song was taught line by line: 'Oh, the river's gonna flow 'cross the land, 'cross the land' the boys would repeat it again and again until Sir PV was perfectly satisfied. "Not SE-EA," Sir PV would say, "Se-EA"; and the boys would say 'se-EA' and they would start again. Repeating a line over and over again can get mighty monotonous and dull, but the Glee Club members sounded anything but monotonous or dull when the song was finally finished and they sang it through. The boys sing as though they really *want* to, and that's what gives the music its mesmeric, haunting quality.

The second thing that attracted me was the relationship between Sir PV and the Glee Club boys. The boys are naughty and there was a lot of tomfoolery going on at the back end in between the songs. But Sir PV never rebuked them, *unless* they carried the fooling into their work. I found the working atmosphere very, very unique. A stickler for discipline might say it is not the way to conduct a class, but Sir PV just had to say one word and work began again. At the end of the special session I attended, he actually apologized for shouting so much that day. "I don't like to



Above : A full-throated practice session in progress.  
Facing page : The Glee Club members with Mr. Param Vir (middle row, extreme right)

shout," he told the boys, "but for a good performance, I need your cooperation, and unless you concentrate, there will be no cooperation." This from a teacher who comparatively didn't shout at all! And yet he got more out of them than if he had shouted right through the session.... this is because the boys don't *just* respect him, they *like* him and *like* being in the Glee Club. Sir PV says he has "Zero Discipline problems" and thinks it is because the boys enjoy being Glee Club singers and they like singing.

The Glee Club was formed in 1976, after the successful rock opera, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, though not as a direct or indirect consequence of it. Before that, there had just been the regular music classes. The Glee Club boys are a selected few from Grade 4, 5 and 6, who seem to have more talent than the rest, and they are chosen on the basis of a small test. For the kind of songs sung in the Glee Club, the boys need to have a wide range in their singing voices — sometimes you have to take a very, very high note, and just a little later you might have to take a very low one. But talent or no talent, no misbehaviour is allowed. Slackers are kicked out mercilessly.

What kind of work is expected of the boys? First, of course, they *must*, absolutely *must* know the words of the songs they sing by heart. One thing that Sir PV can never tolerate is a singer not knowing the words of the song he is singing. Secondly, the boys must sing really loud and clear. They are specially trained to do this: Sir PV feels that Indian children are generally given poor voice training, because Indians, by nature, tend to mumble with an instinctive inclination to inhibit themselves.

The Glee Club singers are taught to "use" their "breath" and, believe me, they use it..... if you have ever heard a Glee Club member practise, you will know what I mean. The skinniest, weakest-looking Glee Club Xavierian can emit a howl in F sharp that would send you running for an air-raid shelter. But, as I have said before, when you listen to the Glee Club in action, it's not the loudness that really registers.... And then, the singers can't just stand there singing loud and clear. In the list of guidelines in their 'Songs of Glee' (a collection of many of the songs they have been taught), they are told "really" to sing, and "not just recite the words". They must be careful to sing the "correct tune", matching their notes to those of the piano or Sir PV.

Sir PV is very, very particular about correct intona-

tion, because in group singing, a single voice out of tune can ruin the whole effect. And, of course, they must keep the right timing, "giving proper respect to musical commas and fullstops". Appearance is important, too. Though the Glee Club sessions are so informal, at a performance every boy is expected to stand straight and smart, in regular, neat uniform. The performance looks so effortless and you are amazed! But behind it lie weeks and weeks of hard training and dedicated effort.

The Glee Club mostly works at songs from operas. They are trained to sing songs from *Oliver!*, *The Mikado*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Joseph's Technicolour Dreamcoat*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Evita*, *Tommy*, and many others. They produced *Joseph's Technicolour Dreamcoat* for a public performance, in collaboration with the Theatre Workshop, which is the corresponding Dramatics' Club of St. Xavier's. They have also given a television performance, and some of them were in the 60-member Xavierian team which formed a part of a programme of Hindi songs arranged by AIR to celebrate its 50th anniversary, recently.

The Glee Club meets for two hours every week on Fridays. School's out at 1 p.m. and the session starts at 2 p.m. with a "warm up" (Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Soh...etc, and its variations). Then they learn a new song, or rehearse one they have just begun to learn. The session ends around 4 to 4.30 p.m. With a whole lot of familiar melodies, not necessarily operatic: 'Edelewiss', for instance, or 'We shall overcome' or the beautiful but less popular 'Happiness is....' which expresses, in the words of Snoopy and the boys, just what the Glee Club is all about.

Though the boys are not trained to sing solo, Sir PV feels that almost all of them are capable of singing solo, and at the recent XPTA performance, about 15-20 boys sang 'Happiness is.....', each taking a different line in turn. Sir PV feels that there is a tremendous amount of talent in the Glee Club, and thinks it's a great pity that the boys are not *creating* any music themselves just now, but only *re-creating* it. He hopes that the parents of these boys will not let all that talent go waste, but give them some training at home.

Performances usually require a lot of extra practise, and this means many more hours of work after school, and even sudden sessions within school hours. The parents are unbelievably cooperative, and they even "make a lot of sacrifices."

Sir PV believes that the musical atmosphere and the encouragement and interest shown at home is greatly responsible for the boys' phenomenal enthusiasm and zeal. Even the teachers don't object when their students are called out for practice before a special show.

The boys themselves are very non-committal about the Glee Club, and uniformly said, yes, they liked being members and no, there were no problems of any kind. But I know from personal contact that being in the Glee Club is tremendous fun. Sir PV can tell it from the interest they show — if for some reason he has to cancel a particular session, there are always scores of protests and why?!!s. The boys take care to "learn their stuff well", which itself speaks volumes for their zest. All this considering that they don't really get a reward for their pains: if you run a race or play

a game of cricket, there is always the motivation to *win*. But there is no such motivation in the Glee Club, and very little internal competition. There is no boy, for instance, who is a 'best singer' or best anything, for that matter. But within the school, the Glee Club is, to use Sir PV's words, a "kind of elite group", and being made a member is an honour — an honour which has to be lived up to. The boys, though they refused to say anything of the sort, *are* proud of their achievements, and the Glee Club, by bringing some relatively 'insignificant' boys into the limelight, has done no end to boost their self-confidence.

I wish all of you could share the fantastic time I had listening to the Glee Club. Next time they put up a show, make sure you don't miss it!

Minnie P. Swami

## STREET OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE

A MINIATURE street, called Dagmar Passage, in north London will take you to the Little Angel Marionette Theatre. In fact you may walk past it and fail to notice the whitewashed building of almost doll's house proportions tucked in at one side of a churchyard. All this is as it should be, for a magical world of exquisite little people should not be too easy to find!

At a recent performance of a rod puppet production of a medieval mystery play, "Noah", the long wooden benches in the tiny auditorium were packed with excited children who did not require the usual sprinkling of adults to hush them when the lights dimmed and God, a magnificent carved head with swirling golden locks and flowing beard, spoke from high above the proscenium, and down below the bearded patriarch cupped his ear.

The play "Noah" is derived from a combination of the 14th century texts. But it is doubtful if many of the children were too concerned with the familiar story being so graphically unfolded by the puppets, each beautifully conceived and executed, and so skilfully manipulated by their operators.

With wonderful ingenuity, Noah was even able to draw a plan for the ark on a convenient rock, and the willing puppet hands of Noah's sons joined together to build the ark, piece by piece, before the audience's eyes.

The Little Angel Theatre is directed by John Wright and his wife Lyndie. Wright, who is now in his early 70s, was a late starter as a puppeteer, not having seen his first marionette show till the 1930s.

It was a new field, but he had a rich background to fall back on: originally a painter, he had also been involved in theatre design, and just about every aspect of backstage work and stage management. And as a child, he had absorbed a lot in the workshop of his grandfather, a carpenter, joiner and builder, and later developed a deep interest in African woodcarving.

The John Wright Marionettes found a permanent home when a ruined hall was taken over in Islington in 1961 and turned into the Little Angel Theatre. It is the only one in Britain—and one of the few in the world—which is devoted to the presentation of puppetry in all its forms. The company

is normally manned by six or seven members and a wide range of techniques is employed—marionettes or string puppets, glove puppets, shadow puppets, and rod puppets, including giant rod figures such as the 2.5m devils in "The Soldier's Tale" (Stravinsky) which, along with "La Boite a Joujoux" (Debussy) and "Amahl and the Night Visitors" (Menotti), was commissioned by the Greater London Council in 1968 and 1969.

There are more than 20 plays in the company's repertoire. Some of the favourites are "Briar Rose", the story of the Sleeping Beauty, Hans Andersen's "The Little Mermaid", and "The Marsh King's Daughter", and Oscar Wilde's "The Fisherman and his Soul".

In a workshop next to the theatre, John Wright carves new puppets, his wife makes

the costumes and the soft puppets, and other helpers do running repairs. There are often urgent "between performance" jobs: after one recent performance of "Noah", the animals that had appeared to board the ark "two by two" in so orderly a fashion must have got into a bit of a scrum, and a little touching-up was needed before they could make their next appearance the following afternoon.

John Wright is eager that the Little Angel Theatre should become a centre for national and international puppeteers. Takeda, an old string puppet company from Japan, and Kala Lok Mandal from Rajasthan, India, have both performed there.

It is said that any puppet buff who visits London soon ferrets out Dagmar Passage and the Little Angel.

*Leonore Blackwood*

## Theatre for Children

**I**N the heart of Moscow, not far from the Kremlin and Red Square, there stands an imposing-looking building. It houses the State Children's Musical Theatre, the only one of its kind in the world.



Above: A sequence from "Three Fat Men". Facing page: Top: Puppeteer John Wright with two members of the cast of "The Soldier's Tale". Bottom: A rehearsal at the Moscow Children's Musical Theatre.

The main task of the theatre, according to its chief director, Natalya Sats, is to cultivate a taste for music in the young listeners from the earliest possible age. Since its inception in 1965, it has staged nearly 30 shows, including operas, ballets, and theatrical Symphony concerts. The shows are both absorbing and simple. Sergei Prokofiev's symphonic story, "Petya and the Wolf", Mikhail Raukhverger's opera, "Little Red Riding Hood", Vladimir Rubin's "Three Fat Men", Tikhon Khrennikov's opera, "The Boy Giant", and others are very popular with the audience.

It is found that the youngest spectators in the 6-7 age group are mainly fond of fairy tales. Children from 10 to 14 prefer to see their coevals on the stage and compare their own deeds with those of the stage characters. Still older teenagers want to see life's problems and conflicts depicted, which will give food for thought. So the theatre's repertoire is prepared with an eye on different interests.

*Pritam Lal*







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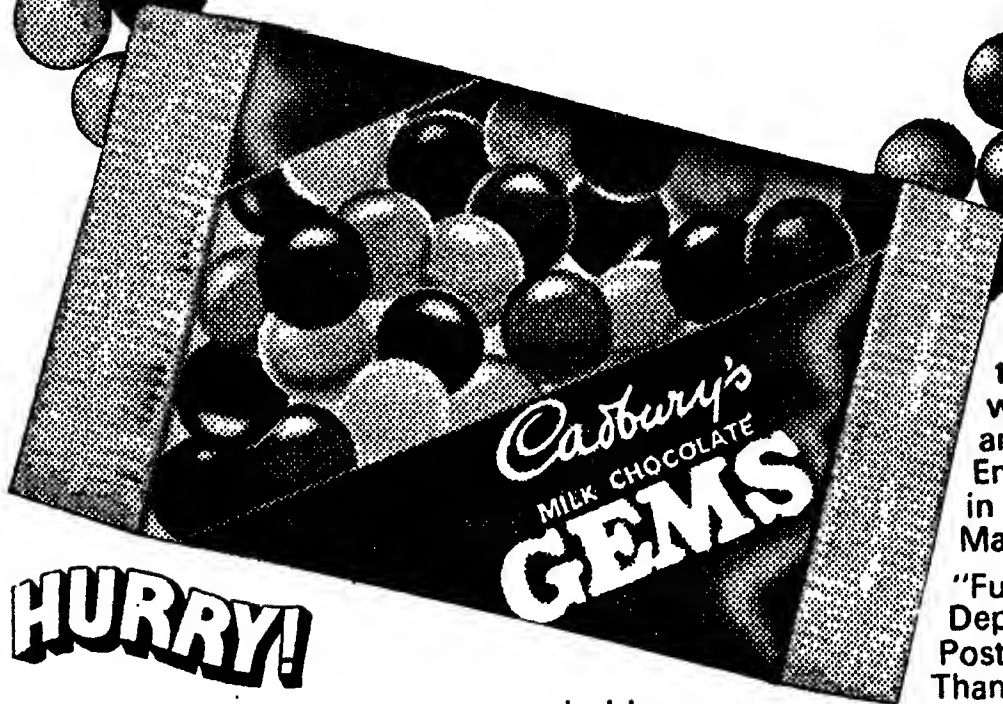
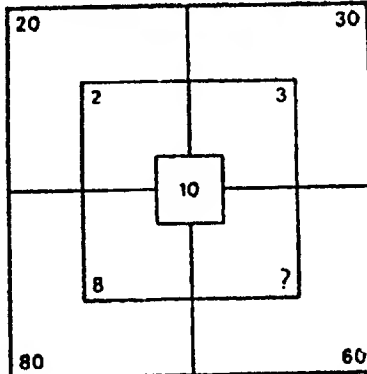
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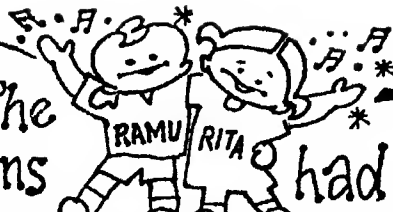



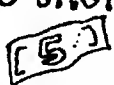
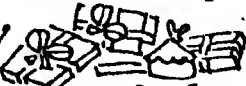


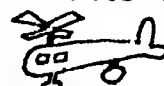


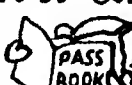

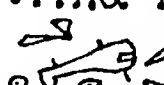




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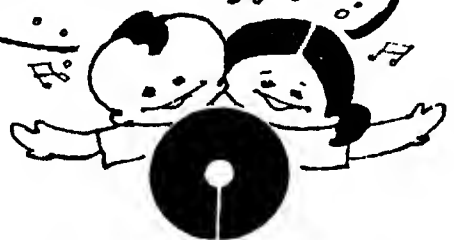
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 The twins had a wonderful birthday party. Their mother baked them a huge  with 6 . All their little friends came. Daddy gave them Rs.  each and Mummy gave them Rs.  each. They got many  and lots of . Ramu rushed out and bought lots of  and a toy . But Rita said she would  her money. Ramu made fun of her and laughed. Rita went with Daddy to the  and opened an account with all her money and got her own . She kept adding her pocket money. Her money grew and grew. And Ramu stopped laughing. His  tore. His  broke. His  were over. He had no money left. When he got his pocket money he went with  to the . He was so proud of his own . "Now I am not going to spend all my money," he said. "I am going to save."

THE END



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 LIKE RAMU. BE LIKE RITA. ASK DADDY OR  
 MUMMY TO OPEN AN ACCOUNT FOR YOU AT **State Bank**  
 AND WATCH YOUR MONEY GROW...

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# THE RAJA'S GIFT

**R**AJA VEERAMARTANDA VARMA once ruled over Travancore, which is now part of Kerala. He was just and intelligent. The people were happy with their ruler. He cared equally for everyone, and built many schools for all to study in.

His greatest passion in life, however, was music. He widely encouraged this fine art. He gave scholarships to deserving artists and





often arranged concerts to which all the great musicians of his state were invited. Once a year, during the 'Onam' festival, he held a grand competition, to which he specially invited musicians from the neighbouring states.

But, he often felt irritated at the behaviour of the audience during the musical sessions. He particularly disliked the way they shook their heads and beat their hands to keep time with the rhythm of the music. All of them, whether they had a musical ear or not, pretended to appreciate the recitals. In fact, they invariably looked like dumb clowns, the whole lot of them! This annoyed the king, as he could not enjoy the music himself.

The Raja ultimately decreed that whoever made any movement while listening to a performance would have his head chopped off!

Ere long, a great concert was being organised in the palace. Many famous musicians took part in it. Music lovers from all over the state came to attend it. The Raja himself was present throughout the performance. There was a variety of music — vocal bhajans, classical music, and instrumental music. Each item was pleasing by itself and the audience remained spellbound.

But not one head moved, not a leg shook, not a hand beat in rhythm to the music. There was no sign of appreciation from the audience. They preferred staying alive to losing their heads!

But one ardent lover of music among them, called Mahadev Iyer, himself an amateur musician, was finding it very difficult to sit still. At one stage, he got so carried away by the music that he began to shake his head. He suddenly realized his mistake. But the Raja's warning could not curb him and soon he also began to beat his hands in rhythm.

The Raja noticed him. Everyone stared at Iyer. Some tried to stop him, but to no avail. When the performance came to an end, there was a stunned silence.

The Raja got up from his seat and summoned Mahadev Iyer to his side. He held him by his arms and smiled at him. He then patted him on his back and said, "I am very

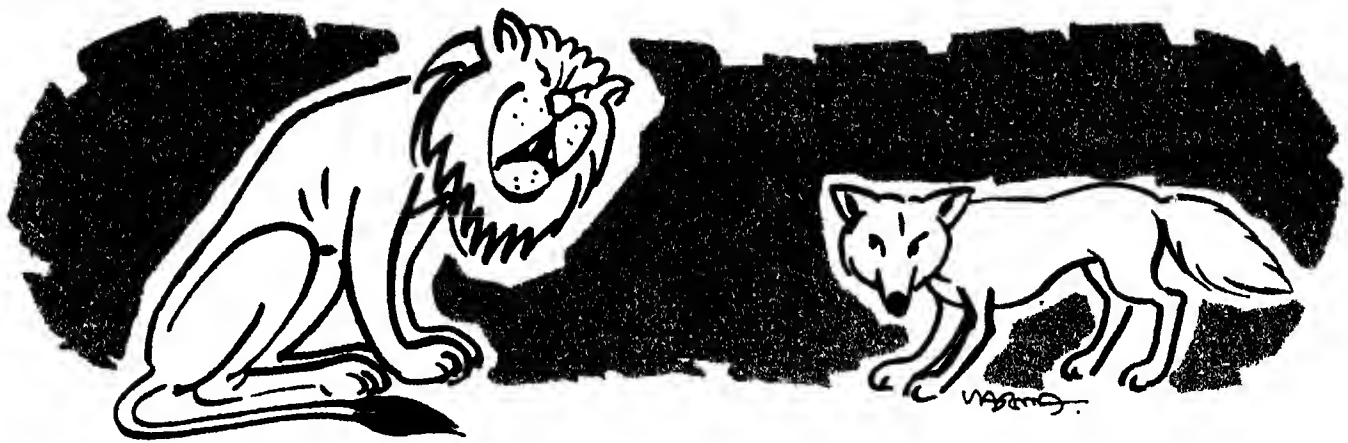
pleased with you. You are the only man amongst all those present here, who is willing to sacrifice his head for the sake of music. And for that, I honour you with a 'Veerashrinkala'." He then instructed his Dewan, who went and brought a beautiful golden chain on a salver. The Raja garlanded Mahadev Iyer, to the utter astonishment of all others in the hall.

*(A Folk Tale from Kerala Retold by Alaka Shankar)*

## My World of Make-believe

Crouched in a forgotten corner  
 of a Number Nine Bus,  
 Waiting . . . .  
 Watching numerous faces  
 of people  
 From different walks of life . . . .  
 Like a whetted knife  
 My imagination leaps——  
 and springs clear of all hurdles.  
 I am forgotten, and I forget the present.  
 As I ride through my world of make-  
 believe  
 I piece together a jigsaw-puzzle  
 of faces, homes and occupations.  
 A spoonful of imagination  
 added  
 to a cup of everyday life  
 Brings happiness and joy.  
 I quickly rouse myself  
 To bring an end to fantasy  
 For, in reality, can the world ever be  
 In perfect peace and harmony?

*Brinda Bose (14)*  
*India*

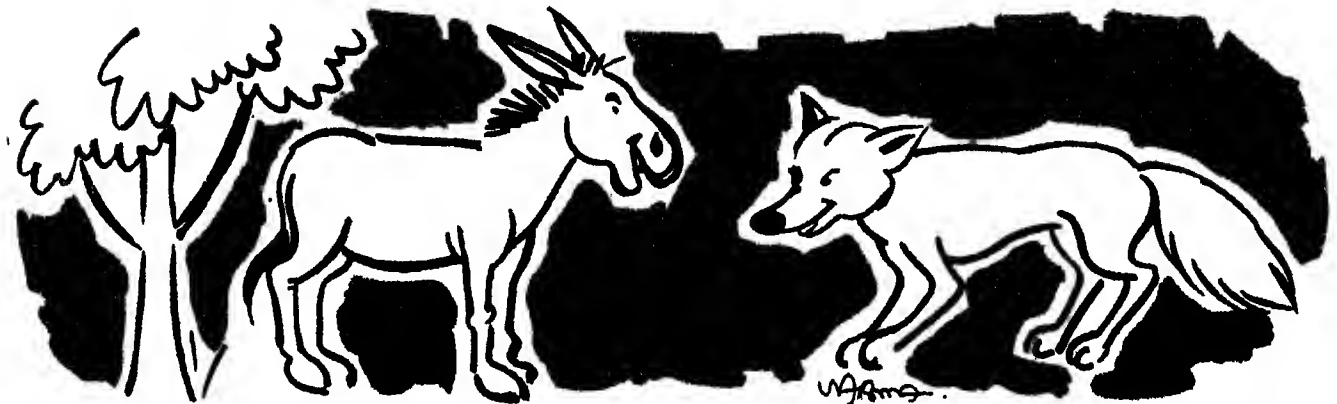


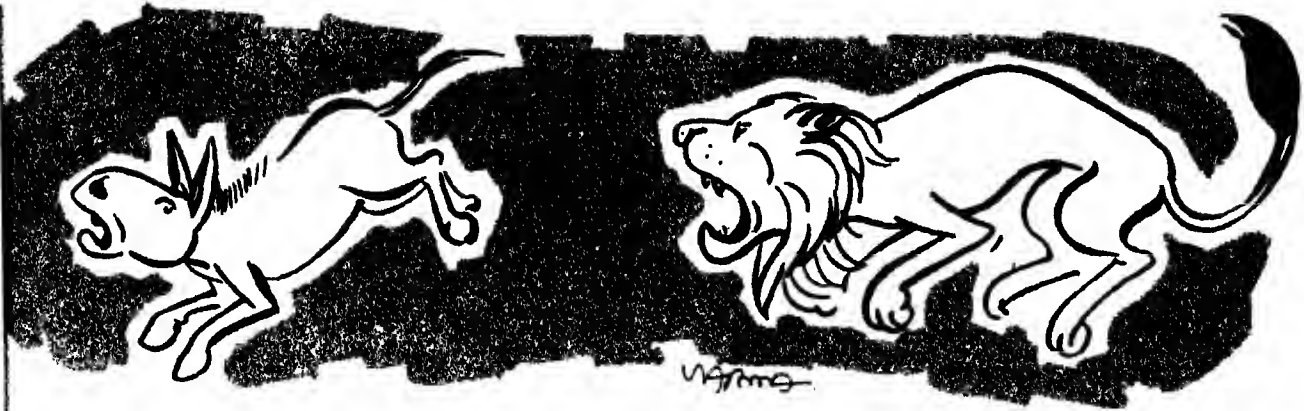
# Brain Drain

*Once a lion who was very old  
Retained a jackal for a servant, we're told.  
He was very loyal to his master  
And being younger could run much faster.  
Bringing His Majesty a kill each day  
He helped drive the lion's hunger away.*

*One day a plump ass the lion espied,  
"I must have that for dinner," he cried.  
The jackal set off to give the ass a good look  
And nab it for his master by hook or by crook.*

*Greeting the ass he praised him a lot  
Extolling the qualities that he had not.  
He got the gullible fool to walk into the lion's den,  
There was no end to his treachery — he was a real number ten.*





*On seeing the ass the lion pounced, hastily,  
But the ass ran into the forest reaching home safely.  
The jackal was cross with the lion for being rash  
Because of which his scheme had been smashed.*

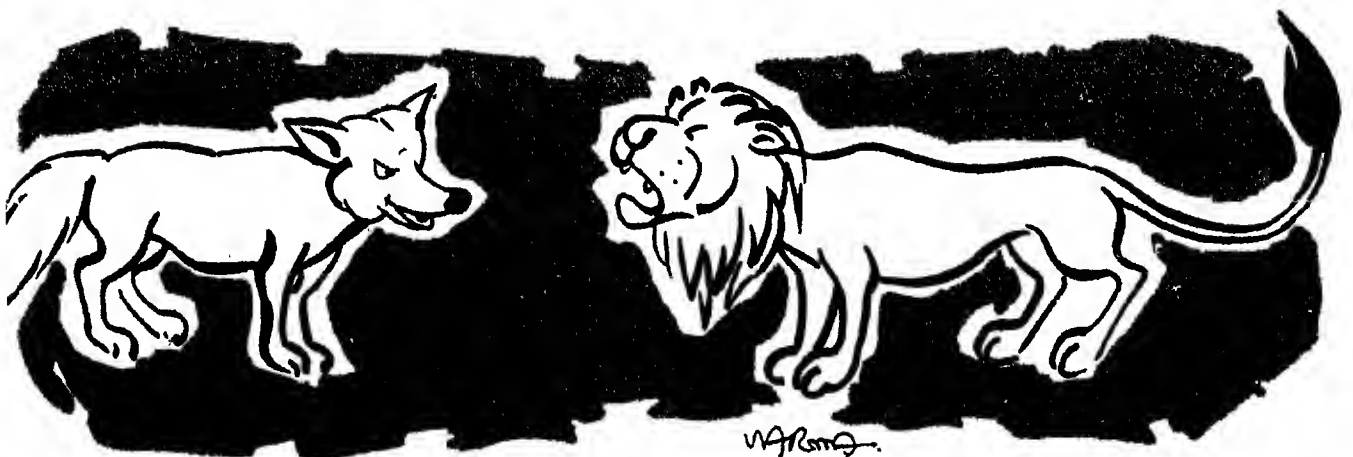
*He went back to the ass and said, "Why did you make all that fuss  
When the lion had only desired to make you one of us?"  
The simpleton agreed to go back to the lair  
And was promptly killed by the waiting lion there.*

*Afterwards the lion went for a bath, leaving the jackal on guard,  
The jackal thought and thought real hard  
That the lion was a glutton indeed.  
Once he began to eat, there would be no left-overs on which to feed.*

*So without further refrain  
He ate up the ass's brain.  
When the lion came back  
He discovered the ass's head had a big crack.*

*When he enquired about the whereabouts of the brain  
The jackal replied, "Sire, if he had any, would he have come again?"*

*(Adapted from The Panchatantra by Shiv Dhavan)*



# A Two-way Reward

**I**N a village near Cuttack, there once lived a very lazy Brahmin and his wife. They had no children and felt contented if they could get two full meals for the day. This, they usually managed by begging from door to door. And most of the time, they were lucky.

One day, it so happened that, in spite of wandering from morning till evening, the Brahmin did not receive any alms. He loathed to go home empty-handed. So, he took a road that led him to the riverside.

He was feeling very hungry and tired. So he sat down on a stone at the edge of the water and decided to quench his hunger somehow. The Brahmin began to imagine, with each handful of water he drank, that he was eating something. With the first handful he said, "This is rice." While drinking a second time, he said, "Now I will mix some curry with the rice." "A little curd is most welcome," he uttered, once again with another gulp of water.

The goddess of the river heard the poor Brahmin and her heart went out to him. She could not bear to see him starving. She placed all the items of food that the Brahmin had mentioned, on three different lotus leaves and put them in an earthen pot and covered it with a lid. Then she sent the pot floating down the river to where the Brahmin was sitting. He noticed the pot and was surprised to see it floating towards him. And he was overjoyed when he caught hold of it and lifted the lid. For, there in the pot were all the three items he had just a little while ago imagined himself eating! He looked about to see if there was anyone around who could have heard him speaking aloud. But he saw no one. He was then convinced that the goddess of the river had blessed him. He fell on his knees and thanked the goddess and then greedily began eating the food. When he had satisfied his hunger, he decided to take the rest of the food (and there was quite a lot) home for his wife.

As his wife heartily ate the sumptuous meal, the Brahmin narrated the story to her. She was thrilled to hear about the goddess's blessing and told him that he should go to the riverside the next day and repeat what he had said to please her.

Early next morning, the Brahmin did not



go begging for alms; instead, he went straight to the riverside. He began drinking water and called aloud the names of a few delicacies, including 'kheer'. In a little while, an earthen pot came floating down with all the items he had mentioned!

Now the Brahmin made this a daily habit. He and his wife lived happily, eating every day from the pot. They led a very lazy life. The goddess, naturally, was unhappy that the Brahmin did nothing for a living. She, therefore, decided to teach the lazybones a lesson.

One day, the Brahmin as usual took the pot home to share the meal with his wife. When he opened the lid, instead of any food, he found slaps, blows, and kicks coming out of the pot in quick succession. The Brahmin and his wife both had a share of all these one after another! They felt sore. Their bodies ached. It was with great difficulty that the Brahmin could put the lid back on the earthen pot.

He realised that the goddess was punishing them for being lazy. "Let us throw the pot away," he declared.

"Oh, no. No, we must not be so ungrateful," his wife scolded him. "I will leave it in our backyard." She then went and left it outside their backdoor. Both of them went to sleep—hungry, sore, and tired.

That very night, a rich Zamindar's house was burgled by some thieves. But they were spotted while escaping with the loot. A large number of people armed with lathis chased them. The thieves ran for their lives. On the way they reached the Brahmin's house. They jumped over the wall into his backyard. They decided to stay there in hiding till their chasers would give up the search. The thieves then thought, why not, while waiting, divide the loot? One of the thieves noticed the earthen pot. He picked it up to put his share in it. But when he opened the lid, slaps, blows and kicks rained on him. The other thieves, who went to his rescue, also received a good beating. They were all thoroughly dazed and shaken up. They suspected that the loot was something accursed. They threw all of it in the backyard and ran away.

The Brahmin and his wife had by then woken up, hearing the commotion outside.

When they came to their backyard, they were amazed to find the whole place strewn with ornaments and jewels.

The Brahmin's wife gasped. "Look what the goddess has given us! I told you not to throw away the pot."

The Brahmin could not believe his eyes. "You are right. She must have sent the blows to teach us not to be lazy."

"Yes," agreed his wife. "And these valuables, she has given us, so that we will do honest work and earn our living."

The Brahmin soon afterwards started working. He and his wife never went for begging, nor did they desire to live out of charity.

*(A Folk Tale from Orissa Retold by Pinky)*

## FRIENDSHIP

Friends, there's a lot of them out there—  
Black, yellow, brown, white all colours.  
But this friendship of mine will never die.  
We have hope for the future.  
When I'm sitting in my rocking chair and  
Ready to die, she'll be there and she'll  
Pull me through it.  
Yeah she will—————

## The Longest Run

My longest run  
Was for this star  
It shone so bright  
But so far  
Until this day  
It was night  
Soon it was light  
And the star was gone  
From my eyes the next night.

## A Dangerous World

When people were slaves, they were  
Whipped until death was to come.  
Now they are free, but in a more  
Dangerous world.  
It's the world of war, brother  
Against brother, sister against  
Sister, man against man.  
It's just like a cat and a dog—  
That's what I can say about this  
Upsetting world.

*[Nancy Osario (10) Puerto Rico]*

# A Boyhood Dream Reaches Its Peak !

*This year marks the silver jubilee of Norgay and Edmund Hillary's heroic ascent of Mount Everest. Sherpa Tenzing had grown up in the shadows of the Himalayas, and the successful climb to the Chomolungma's peak was for him the achievement of a cherished boyhood dream.*

**"I** AM a sherpa, a simple man of the mountains, of the great Himalayas. From boyhood I have had a dream—to climb the Everest, which my people call Chomolungma, 'Goddess Mother of the World', and 'the peak so high no bird can fly over it'. This is the self-portrait of Tenzing Norgay, who climbed the Everest 25 years ago.

(The sherpas are a tribe of people who are of Mongolian stock. It is believed that there are some 100,000 of them living in the eastern Himalayan region. Mostly illiterate and poor, they have become prominent in recent decades as 'the backbone' of the Himalayan climbers because of their ability to carry heavy loads and act as guides.)

In the case of sherpa Tenzing Norgay, his lofty dream was blessed with luck. The dream came true when he stood on top of the 29,002-foot (world's highest) peak on May 29, 1953. But it had been long years of strenuous effort, from the bottom of Everest to the top—every foot of the 29,002 feet (nearly 7 miles high!). In the process, the poor unknown sherpa boy rose from a ragged mountain porter to a wearer of coats with rows of medals and an honoured guest of monarchs and prime ministers the world over!

Tenzing owes his success to persistent effort during his boyhood, overcoming one obstacle after another with stern determination. He was born in Solo Khumbu in 1914, the eleventh of 13 children in a humble sherpa family. Most of his boyhood was spent tending large herds of yaks, the sherpas' main wealth. The yaks are like buffaloes, but sturdier in build and with bushy



hair to withstand the icy Himalayan weather.

When the first ever expedition to climb the Everest was organized by the British mountaineers in 1921, Tenzing was just seven years old. The attempt did not succeed, but the sherpas, who returned to Solo Khumbu after serving as porters to the British climbers, found no youngster keener to hear of their adventures than Tenzing. This is not surprising because, very early in life, he had come to realize that he was born 'not only in, but for the mountains'.

According to one account, a holy man is said to have predicted, on Tenzing's birth, that "the boy would grow up to be a great

man!" This was followed by a Lama (Buddhist priest revered by the sherpas), who insisted that the boy be named Tenzing Norgay, instead of Namgyal Wangdi which the boy's parents had originally proposed. Tenzing, in sherpa language, means 'supporter of religion', and Norgay means 'The Fortunate'. Very prophetic it turned out to be!

A deeply religious father decided that Tenzing should become a Lama. So, he was sent to a monastery for training in religious rites. But Tenzing had his own way. On one occasion, the Lama teacher hit the boy on his bare head with a wooden board for some mistake he had committed. The boy found in this an opportunity to leave the monastery in protest. From then on the call of the mountains was greater for Tenzing Norgay than that of priestly doctrines.

By the time he was 18, Tenzing left Solo Khumbu for Darjeeling, the Himalayan hill station in India, which is invariably the starting point of Everest expeditions and so the centre for recruiting porters and helpers to the climbing teams. The sherpas assemble here hoping to be selected, as this is their main source of income.

Tenzing at first tried to get some minor jobs in the 1933 British expedition to the Everest. But he was rejected as "too young and with no previous experience". Though disappointed, Tenzing stayed on in Darjeeling learning all the rudiments of climbing with heavy loads, which a porter is expected to carry. This proved very useful when the 1935 expedition came along. When Tenzing appeared for selection, it was touch and go in the beginning. At first, the sherpas with past experience were given preference. Luckily, two more men were needed. To improve his chances at the selection, Tenzing put on a new khaki bush-jacket and shorts, after getting them on loan from a friend! The trick worked. He was chosen. Incidentally, it might have been no mere accident that the young and ambitious Tenzing should have attracted the attention of Eric Shipton, the leader of the 1935 expedition. Shipton himself, possessing an adventurous spirit, was keen on mountain-climbing since his boyhood!

From the start, Tenzing Norgay displayed high ideals in his approach to the job of porter. While the other sherpas were worried about wages and rewards, Tenzing was happy that "at last he had become a mountain-man lucky to be able to see Chomolungma!" When one's heart is set on Mount Everest, one should not worry about the molchill' was the high ideal he pursued from the beginning.

What of the expedition itself and Tenzing's role in the first venture on Everest? Much to his regret, the party could not reach the summit. A delay in arrangements and the early onset of the monsoon proved severe handicaps. But the leader, Eric Shipton, used the occasion for rigorous high altitude climbing, exploring new routes to the Everest, as the four previous attempts from the traditional route on the Tibetan side of the Himalayas had taken much time.

All this proved wonderful exercise for young Tenzing on his first time on the Big Mountain. Of this he recalls: "It was exciting for me from the beginning. Especially so because it was not just any mountain we had come to but the Everest itself. I thought I now had my first chance to realize my boyhood dream."

That apart, Tenzing worked hard for days carrying heavy loads. But he did not mind this at all. "For a chance to climb the Everest, I'm willing to take on any job, however difficult," he declared. In this spirit, he quickly learned the techniques of mountaineering. To quote his own words: "The rest of the sherpas were ever eager to go down. They did their work as a job for the wages and wanted to go no farther than they had to. But I was eager to go higher and higher up the Himalayas."

When the bitter Himalayan blizzard forced the party to return to base after climbing about 23,000 feet, Tenzing, the youngest of the group, felt sore. But he soon reconciled himself with the thought, "Oh, well, you are only 21. There will be other expeditions. And soon you will become a Tiger among the sherpas." (Tiger is the title conferred on a sherpa for outstanding climbing talent.)

Tenzing did become a Tiger soon when, in 1938, he climbed up to 27,200 ft. Blessed



with a strong constitution, the high altitude never bothered Tenzing at all, as it worried the other sherpas. In fact, it used to be said of him by others with envy, "Oh, Tenzing, he has got three lungs, and the higher he goes the better he feels!" And Tenzing himself modestly says: "When I am on the Everest I can think of nothing else. I want only to go on, farther and farther. It is a dream, a need, and a fever in my blood."

Needless to say, Tenzing became the Number One sherpa to accompany Everest expeditions. Of these, 1952 proved a great year for Tenzing when he had the honour to climb with the Swiss team led by Raymond Lambert. "He became my companion of the heights and closest friend," Tenzing

fondly recalls. Lambert and Tenzing climbed to within 800 feet of the peak, the highest point reached till then. An unexpected storm forced the two to go back to base.

Tenzing did not have to wait long to achieve success. In the 1953 British expedition, he became a Sirdar (Leader of the sherpas) and a climber, too, enjoying equal ranking with the British climbers. "This is the time you must do it," Tenzing prayed. A friend gave a small Indian flag "to put in the right place". His daughter Nima gave a red and blue pencil she was using as a good luck charm. It worked!

Tenzing Norgay's climb to the Everest peak on May 29, 1953 is now history. The boyhood dream had at last been realized!

*J. Radhakrishnan*

## A TRUE STORY

# FIVE FEET AWAY FROM DEATH

**E**DWARD WHYMPER shaded his eyes and gazed up at the peak of the Matterhorn above him, shimmering and glittering in its snow-white glory against a perfect blue sky. To him the Matterhorn was the most beautiful mountain of Switzerland, the most magnificent in the whole of Europe.

For many years, he had wished to ascend it, longed to stand on its peak just once! He made many unsuccessful attempts. He was always forced to descend by many an obstacle. Today he had reached higher than anyone ever before him; today he would make it; the mountain would be his! He would be the conqueror of the Matterhorn!

Edward Whymper smiled and drew his hat with a narrow visor, which shielded his face from the glare of the snow. He gripped the metal-edged baton in his hand tighter as he worked his way up.

Suddenly, he came face to face with a huge, steep rock. He frowned and scanned the surface of the rock. He shook his head sadly. These rocks seemed impassable. How he wished he had brought his ice-axe

from the tent; it might have helped him. He felt a wave of disappointment sweep over him. 'Oh it is so frustrating! Today I will not reach the top; I'll come back and try a different route tomorrow,' Edward Whymper sighed.

With a very heavy heart, he descended slowly, carefully feeling for the ground under his feet, and keeping a good grip with his hands on the rocks. Suddenly, the ground under his feet shifted. Edward Whymper looked down at a long slope of snow and ice, falling over 200 feet and disappearing in a vertical leap of about 800 feet to a glacier below. He gasped and held tighter to the rocks. Then he scanned the dangerous mirror of snow and ice, beyond which lay safety.

How he again wished he had brought his axe with him. It would not have taken much time to cut steps into the ice; now with the metal point of his baton, it would take an eternity. Cautiously, he began to edge round the corner, gripping the rock with both his hands. And concentrating all his senses on

each movement, on each of his steps, he moved sideways.

But before he knew what was happening, he had slipped, lost his balance and, with a sick and sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach, he found himself tumbling on to the slope spinning down. His body hit some rocks that protruded from the snow, bounced out and went downwards the slope in ever increasing speed. His baton was torn away from his hand, his hat flew off his head and an anguished cry died on his lips as he spun down more than 200 feet in seven or eight hard bounces, hitting either the rock or the snow and being thrown off them time after time. There was nothing he could hold on, nothing he could grab, nothing that would save him from thundering down the glacier into certain death. His body again struck a rock. He felt a terrible pain shoot through his body. He moaned, knowing that nothing would save him from falling down into the deadly abyss. 'Oh, god, help!' he muttered and closed his eyes.

At that moment he felt himself pulled back by an invisible hand. His clothes got entangled in a rock only for a moment, but in that very second he instinctively clutched at the rock, and grabbed it with all his might. He saw the stones and rocks that his body had dislodged spin and whirl down over the brink and disappear. He gripped the rock tighter and tried to pull himself up and away from the extreme edge of the precipice, with nothing but a glacier some 800 feet below.

He did not dare to turn round and look back. He listened with fright to the whir of the spinning stones and rocks crashing down into the white, icy abyss. For a moment he closed his eyes, as a severe pain benumbed even his senses. He desperately clutched at the rock and pulled himself up. And with the last ounce of strength left in him, he crawled over it. His hands and his face were bleeding profusely from innumerable cuts and bruises. His whole body was aching and trembling with pain. Stars were dancing in front of his eyes, and a deadly tiredness had

crept into his limbs. He fought them all, pain, terror, and tiredness, and pulled himself to a place of safety. Only then did he allow the heavy darkness enter his head, enter his whole battered body.

Edward Whymper fainted.

He did not know how long he lay near the rock; he did not feel the wind claw at his face, nor the cold nipping his fingers and legs.

When he opened his eyes, the sun stood low in the west. An icy wind blew from the east, tearing at his hair. Edward Whymper shook his head puzzled, and looked down the slope. Suddenly, everything that had happened came back to him in a flash. He shivered. Without wasting much time, he slapped snow and ice on his still bleeding wounds and tried to cool his hot forehead. Then, very slowly and very painfully, he started his way off the mountain, down to the small village of Breuil. Completely exhausted, with his body aching, his vision blurred, he finally reached the guest house where he was staying. With desperate effort he stumbled up the stairs and pushed the door open.

"Mon dieu, monsieur," cried the elderly owner from behind the bar. "What has happened? What has happened?"

Edward Whymper stared at him, unable to move or speak. For the second time that day, he felt a warm, black emptiness rush within him and enter his head. But before he could sink to the ground, he felt hands holding him up, dragging him to a chair.

Gratefully, he accepted a glass of hot red wine, and felt the sweet liquid send a wonderful warmth in his whole body.

"Ah!" murmured Edward Whymper thankfully and closed his eyes.

And when he opened them again, gazing up into the sympathetic eyes of the villagers around him, he sighed deeply and whispered: "I had a narrow escape. I was just five feet away from death."

S. S.

Once upon a time, in the topmost but one flat, on the twelfth floor of a tall building, lived a little boy called Ramesh.

He lived with his grandmother and grandfather, because he had no parents. Ramesh was five years old, with a dark mop of hair and big, black eyes. Grandpa was very old, and when he grinned you could see he had no teeth! Grandma was plump and wrinkled and had silvery hair. They were both very fond of Ramesh, and he in turn loved them very much.

He loved his grandpa's grin and his grandma's cooking. He loved listening to grandpa's tales and grandma's lullabies. And when they were both busy, he loved staring out of the windows of their flat.

There wasn't much you could see outside—just many other buildings with rows and rows of flats. But, if Ramesh stood right up on tiptoe he could see the street below, and cars and people passing by. And this was

(that's what Ramesh called granny's sister) gossiped, and grandpa listened to them and sipped his tea.

When the visit was over, they would all go down in the lift to the groundfloor, and see granny-auntie to the big glass doors of the building.

There, granny-auntie would say to grandpa, "When are you coming over to see me, Rajendra?" And grandpa would furrow his eyebrows and reply, "Never. You know we don't go out ever since the ACCIDENT." Granny-auntie would mutter disapprovingly to herself and walk out of the glass doors. She would turn and wave and go right down the road.

"The ACCIDENT was what your parents died in. It was a car crash," granny would explain to Ramesh.

"Cars are dangerous things. Walking on the road is dangerous, too," grandpa would say sternly, taking Ramesh by the hand and

# THE BIG WIDE WORLD

very interesting for Ramesh, who had never been out of the building, he lived in. Grandma and grandpa never went out either. Grandpa said he was too old to tramp about and grandma did all her shopping by telephone or sent the liftman to do it for her.

Sometimes, Ramesh wished that one of the cars in the street would stop and the people in it would come right up to see him. For Ramesh loved visitors from the World he knew nothing about. But, visitors came very, very seldom.

The only visitor, who came quite often, was granny's sister who lived in a house on the other side of town. She always brought Ramesh a present—sweets or a big red ball, or a set of building blocks.

On such visiting days, Granny would make special snacks for tea—barfi and pakoras and cake. Ramesh would eat the most of course, while granny and granny-auntie,

marching him back into the lift.

So that was all Ramesh ever saw of the World. He didn't know much about it, or about all the people in the World. The only people he knew were the postman, the grocer, the doctor, and the liftman who ran errands for granny. He didn't know anyone his own age—there weren't any children in the building, and very few families. Most of the flats were just offices. So Ramesh and his grandparents were left quite alone, and Ramesh grew up a rather ignorant child.

Then one day, there came a most unexpected knock on the door. Grandpa opened it and there was a strange young man outside. "Hello," he said shaking grandpa's hand, "I'm Rohan Sharma your new neighbour." Then he walked right in and sat down on the sofa, before anyone could say a word.

Ramesh stared hard at the stranger's black beard and twinkling eyes. The man

saw Ramesh, got up and shook his hand too. Granny came and the stranger said "namaste" to her. Then, he began talking to her, while grandpa furrowed his eyebrows and looked most disapproving. But granny paid no attention to grandpa. In fact, she offered the visitor a cup of tea!

When he was leaving, Rohan Sharma stopped at the door, and said to Ramesh, "Come and see me some time, little 'un, I'm just upstairs."

Ramesh was really excited. He had never had an invitation before! Could he really go and visit this nice new neighbour, all on his own?

But, before he could ask granny, grandpa said aloud, "Hmph! In my days young men weren't so informal. An artist indeed!"

Ramesh walked in, right into a big colourful room with lots of tables and chairs and clothes and books lying in a big jumble.

At the far end of the room, at a funny kind of tilted table, sat Rohan Sharma: "Come on over, little 'un," he said. Ramesh walked over—and when he got closer he saw that Rohan Sharma was dressed in a long overall and he was painting!

He was dabbing colour with a brush onto a big piece of canvas—blue for the sky, red and yellow and pink for the sun. "That's a sunset," said Rohan Sharma.

"Oh please, can I paint too?" asked Ramesh. Rohan Sharma smiled, "Not on this one, Ramesh," he said, "but I can give you some paint and paper for your very own."

"Thank you Mr. Sharma," said Ramesh,



Ramesh knew what that was. Once, he had made a picture of granny, with grandpa's pen. Granny had said it was a nice picture. And grandpa had said, "Why, you're quite an artist!"

Ramesh decided that he must go and see what a real artist did. The very next afternoon, when his grandparents were having their after-lunch-nap, Ramesh went quietly to the door. He stood on a chair and unlatched the door. It creaked open.

Ramesh stepped out and there, right before him was the back staircase. He climbed up the steps to the next floor, and then, feeling very, very brave he knocked on it—rap, rap rap.

At once a voice called out, "Come in!"

all aglow with excitement.

"I'm Uncle Rohan," said Rohan Sharma.

Then he brought Ramesh some paint and paper and a brush, and Ramesh sat down to paint.

"What will you paint?" asked Uncle Rohan.

"Granny," said Ramesh and painted granny in brown and pink and white. Then he painted grandpa, pipe and all.

"What will you paint next?" asked Uncle Rohan.

"A building," said Ramesh and painted a big grey building.

"What about a garden, with some flowers?" suggested Uncle Rohan.

"What's a garden?" asked Ramesh.

Uncle Rohan was most surprised. "Have you never seen a garden? A garden is a place where flowers grow," he said.

"What's flowers?" asked Ramesh.

Uncle Rohan just stared and stared at Ramesh. Then he took a brush and painted a Big Red Rose. "There," he said, "that's a flower, a Red Rose. Flowers are things that people give people whom they love." Uncle Rohan asked Ramesh many questions after that about him, and understood how Ramesh had never seen the World. He showed Ramesh some of his paintings. "That's a street," he said, "and those are shops, and that is a school and that is the sea, and those are mountains."

Ramesh was fascinated. He almost forgot

it was tea time. Finally, he said goodbye and rushed back home. After that Ramesh went to see Uncle Rohan every afternoon. Uncle Rohan told him lots of stories of fairies and flowers and animals and birds and many other things that lived in the World. One day, Uncle showed Ramesh a book—not a big book with lots of words like grandpa's books, but a book with plenty of pictures. There was even a picture of a garden with birds and flowers in it. Ramesh was thrilled.

Then came granny's birthday. Ramesh had been talking of it for days—there was to be a special tea party. Granny-auntie was coming and so was Uncle Rohan! The day before the party, Uncle Rohan asked Ramesh, "What present are you giving granny? People give people present on birthdays, you know."

"I could give her my ball," said Ramesh, but Uncle Rohan didn't think granny would like a ball.



That night, Ramesh thought and thought about a present for granny. Then he went to sleep. He dreamt about a Big Red Rose. "That's it," he said when he woke up in the morning. "I'm going to give granny a Big Red Rose."

So that afternoon, right after lunch Ramesh slipped out of the flat. He rushed upstairs and said, "Uncle Rohan, I must give granny a Big Red Rose. Where can I find a Rose?"

And Uncle Rohan smiled and took Ramesh by the hand and together they went out in search of the Big Red Rose.

They went all the way down to the ground floor of the building, and stepped out of the glass doors into the street.

When he saw all the traffic Ramesh was very, very scared. But he clutched bravely to Uncle Rohan's hand and on they went. They went down one street and then another, and there was a park—green grass, tall trees and lots of flowers of many different colours! Exactly as Uncle Rohan had said.

"Why! The World is beautiful," said Ra-

mesh to himself. Just as he said that, he saw it—a Big Red Rose.

The Rose stood all by itself on a tall, green stem. Its proud head was uplifted, its crimson petals shone in the sun. And from it wafted the most wonderful fragrance in the World.

Gently, Ramesh plucked the Rose. He held it carefully to himself and said, "Uncle Rohan, let's go home."

So, home they went, down one street and then another, into the building and up the twelve floors.

When they got to the flat, the door was wide open and there were granny and grandpa. "Ramesh!" screamed granny putting her arms right round him.

"I've brought you a Big Red Rose, from the World, granny," said Ramesh.

Then granny hugged him and cried and laughed and sniffed the Rose, all together. And grandpa smiled too, but a tear dropped down his nose.

"It's a long time since we've seen a Rose," said grandpa. And he pinned the Rose gently into granny's silver hair.

*Sujata Madhok*

## UNCLE MOHAN MEETS AN ARTIST

THE next day my mother wanted us to help her clean our house. She asked us, Ramu and I, to take the carpets out into the sun. She then pressed brushes and brooms into our hands and asked us to clean the carpets.

"But why?" we cried. "It is not Holi, nor is it Diwali yet. Why are you spring-cleaning the house now, mummy?"

"I don't know," my mother replied casually, "but my little finger is itching. . ."

"Oh! oh!" we cried in unison. "Then something is going to happen."

We smashed and thrashed, hit and hammered the carpets till we were ourselves covered in a heavy cloud of dust. My mother cried, wringing her hands together, "Enough, enough. Go, have a wash, both of you."

After we had made ourselves clean and presentable, my Uncle Mohan grinned and whispered, "Let's go somewhere." My Uncle took his Mexican hat, and I carried his Japanese umbrella. We shouted a "Bye" to my mother, who had propped herself on the dining table, cleaning the fan above. We got no answer!

"Let's go to the War Museum. Have you ever seen real, old weapons and armour?" My Uncle asked us as we got on to the main road.

No, we had not. But when we reached the Museum, the watchman there told us that it was closed. It was a holiday. Didn't we know that? We were very disappointed. We did not want to return home where my mother was cleaning the house with such

determination as if the King of China was going to pay us a visit! So, we started strolling down the road towards the marketplace.

"Hal" exclaimed my Uncle. "Look, there is an art exhibition on. Come on, kids, let us see what modern art is!"

We walked into the galleries. The walls around were covered with a lot of paintings. At the entrance to the hall, which led into another, a black-bearded man sat at a table.

Uncle Mohan, Ramu, and I bunched around a large picture and stared at it.

"Not a bad composition," remarked my Uncle.



To tell you the truth, I did not know what 'composition' was. I kept on looking at the 'not so bad composition'. All I could see was a huge brown and yellow patch on a white background, a patch that looked like my mother's old duster with lots and lots of holes. I kept on looking at the painting the way my Uncle did, tilting my head sideways and closing my left eye. But it did not make any difference!

At that moment, the bearded man got up and came to us introducing himself as the artist. He shook hands with my Uncle, and

they started talking about 'realism', 'impressionism', and many other 'isms'. They talked about 'abstraction', 'pure abstraction' and 'near abstraction', all of which were so difficult that I could neither understand nor pronounce them. Ramu and I went round the hall by ourselves and were very disappointed.

Since my Uncle Mohan was still talking about 'symbols' and 'images', Ramu and I left the first hall and entered the second one.

What a change! Sure, the pictures here were not too big nor too bright; they were just wonderful. I could see a mother smiling at her child; three old men sitting around the fire, their faces aglow in the flames; a man carrying a boy on his shoulder and the boy holding on to his balloon, laughing.

Ramu and I looked at all these paintings without having to tilt our heads or close our left eyes!

And then we stood in front of a picture of a young woman. Her long black hair fell over her shoulders. She had a straight, delicate nose and fine lips. But the most beautiful thing about her face were her large brown eyes, sad and smiling at the same time.

The face looked familiar. I turned round and looked at the artist. Yes, it was the same face, wasn't it? I looked at the painting again and then back at the artist. Yes, it was the same face! No doubt about it. The woman smiled. She smiled the same wonderful smile — sad and happy at the same time.

"Is it your picture?" I asked her. The young woman nodded her head. She now looked more beautiful than in the picture. I wanted to tell her that but I did not.

She took us along the whole exhibition. She explained to us that when an artist paints the face of a person it is called a portrait, and when he paints his own face it is called a self-portrait.

My brother, who sometimes thinks he is very clever, said, "So, this is **your** self-portrait?"

The young lady once again nodded and smiled. She explained everything. She even told us what 'composition' is. When we came back to her self-portrait, Ramu wanted to know, "How can you paint a face so real, exactly as it is?"



The young woman laughed. She must have been amused. "You see. . ." she started but, suddenly, she stopped and looked up at someone standing behind us. I turned round and saw my Uncle Mohan. But Uncle was not looking at us. He had no eyes for the painting, either. He simply gazed down at the young woman. Very slowly he lifted his hat and said, "How do you do?"

"How do you do?" responded the young woman and looked up at Uncle Mohan with exactly the same expression she had in her self-portrait.

"Uncle Mohan," cried Ramu, "look, isn't it beautiful?" and he pointed to the portrait.

"Yes, it is very beautiful," answered my Uncle slowly, without even glancing at it.

The young woman blushed and dropped her eyes. Uncle Mohan looked around dazedly, as if waking from a deep sleep. "Oh, yes, it is very beautiful," he repeated and finally looked at the portrait.

He looked at it for a long time. He did not comment on it; he did not talk about 'realism', 'expression', 'form', or 'abstraction'. He just said, "I want to buy that painting."

I held my breath. What was my Uncle saying? Maybe it cost a hundred rupees, or perhaps more? Did we have that much

money with us? I doubted.

Fortunately, the young woman cried, "Oh, actually, it is not for sale."

Now my Uncle Mohan, too, said, "Oh," and looked very, very sad. He looked pale and lost, and I felt sorry for him.

I think even the young woman must have felt something amiss, for she said, "All right, I'll see. I'll think about it."

Uncle Mohan was so happy that he shook hands with her and said "Thank you" three times and told her how wonderful it was, and that he had never seen a better and more beautiful portrait in his whole life. "We will come again tomorrow," he promised and dropped her hand. He lifted his hat once again. "Good-bye," he said.

"Good-bye," replied the young woman, and her large, sad eyes glowed warm and bright.

On our way home, my Uncle did not say much. "Uncle Mohan," I asked, "do you have so much money?"

"For what?" he asked, perplexed.

"To buy that painting," I cried.

"No," he replied and scratched his head, so that his hat nearly fell off. "No, and I think that will pose a serious problem."

He was right.

*Sigrun Srivastava*

## MY FAMILY

My sister's very careless,  
 She loses her things very fast;  
 And she is so — so slow,  
 She can never finish her breakfast.  
 And sometimes she is rude,  
 very, very rude;  
 But other times she is polite,  
 and very, very good.  
 When she is good and nice,  
 she looks as pretty as the moon;  
 And what's so good about her?  
 she forgives everybody soon.  
 I like my mother,  
 'cause she is so nice;  
 She can cook chappatis,  
 and she can cook rice.  
 She is always very good,  
 never unkind;

And always the best thoughts  
 come to her mind.  
 My father is quite tall,  
 he's without moustache;  
 And even with the strongest and  
 cleverest man, he can win a match.  
 He is always very kind,  
 to everybody;  
 And as I love him so much,  
 he too loves me.  
 So, you see, my family is so nice,  
 with all good habits;  
 If you ever get time,  
 please do pay us visits.

*Ashirna Kulkarni (10)*  
*India*

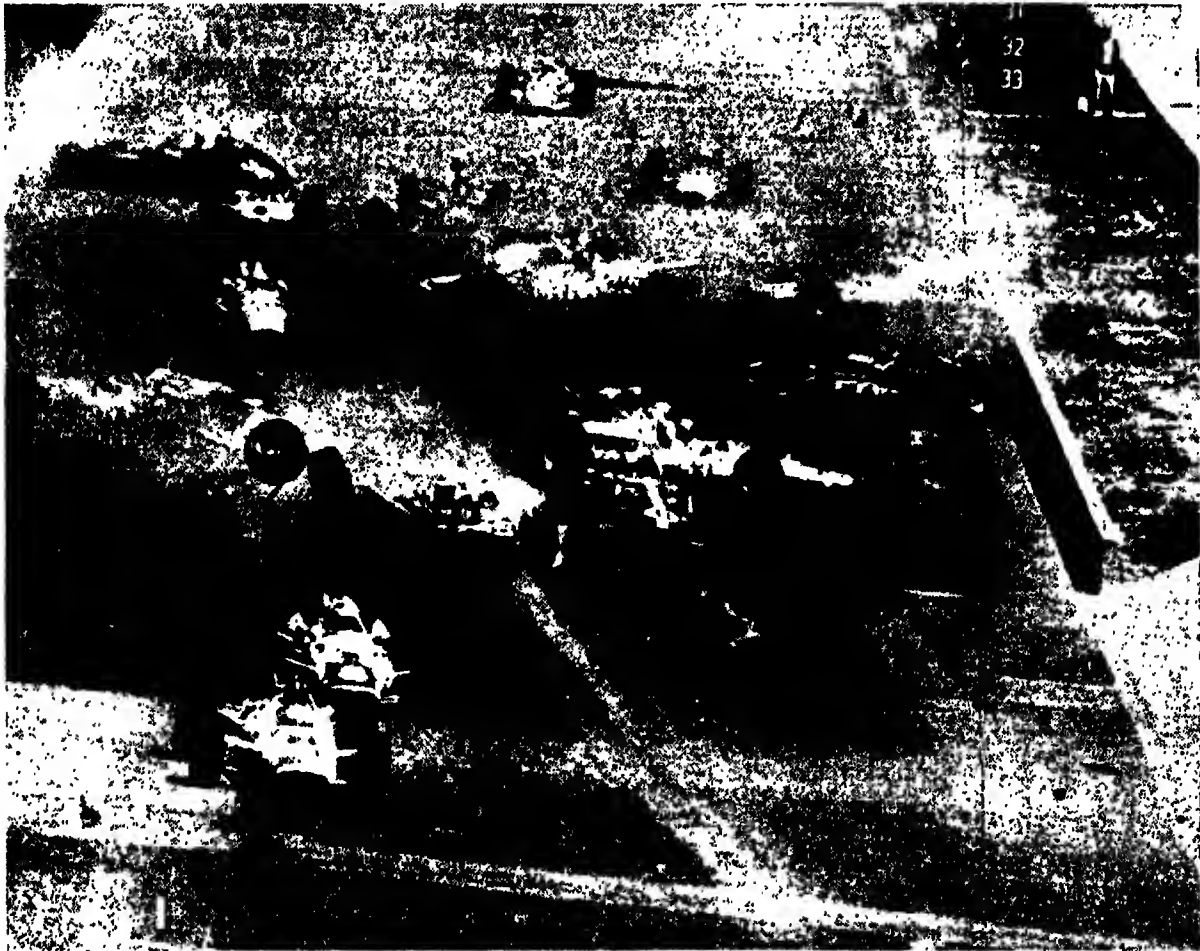
# Lauda-Hunt Confrontation

**J**IM CLARK'S sudden death in 1968 came as a big shock to all his close friends, especially those in the racing circles. It made Jochen Rindt of Austria remark that he would retire the day he won the world title! But the cruel hand of fate prevented Rindt from keeping his word. He was posthumously awarded the World Championship after having been killed in practice for the 1970 Italian Grand Prix.

Less than three months later, Bruce McLaren was killed in a crash at Goodwood in Britain while testing a car of his own conception. All these three men were good friends of the Scottish driver, Jackie Stewart.

Their deaths upset Stewart, but it also made him resolve to make racing a safer sport.

He began a campaign to this effort and pioneered the wearing of flameproof underwear during racing. The deaths of his close friends prompted him to think of retiring. But it was only in 1973, after three World Championship titles, that he took the ultimate step. It is truly ironical that while so many expert drivers lost their lives on the track (Lorenzo Bordini, Bob Anderson, Milk Spence, Ludovico Scarfiotti and Piers Courage among others since 1966), Jack Brabham, one of motor-racing's all-time greats when he retired in 1970 at the age of 44, had only suffered



Tyres fly as racers swerve to avoid hitting cars that had already crashed, at the Indianapolis '500' in 1968. Miraculously, no one was injured.

a broken ankle as his most serious injury in 23 years of international racing. He joined Fangio and Nuvolain, who have never been hurt while racing cars.

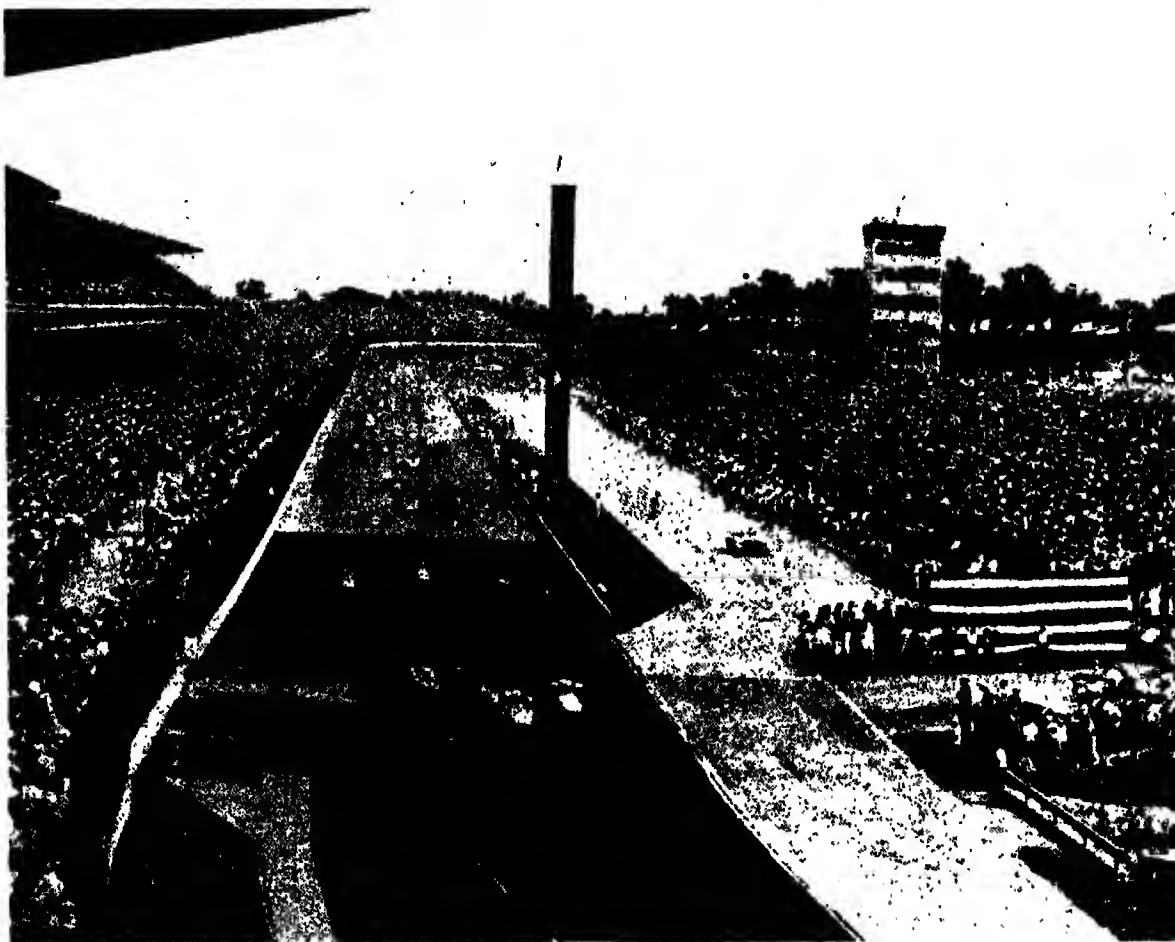
Considering injuries, the most remarkable rebound that any racing driver has made from an accident must be the one by Niki Lauda of Austria. In August 1976, during the German Grand Prix at Nurburgring, Lauda badly burned his face and lungs in a second lap crash and almost died in a German hospital. Incredibly, racing enthusiasts found Niki on the track for the Italian Grand Prix a mere four weeks later. Meanwhile, his arch rival, James Hunt, was trying his utmost to outpoint the Austrian for the World Championship title.

The story of their struggle is a classic one. The confrontation between the two acc drivers fired public imagination as never before.

The 1976 season began with the usual gusto, with all world class drivers aiming

for their common goal. Right in the beginning, Niki Lauda raced into the head with grand victories in Brazil and South Africa. His Ferrari seemed unbeatable, till James Hunt in his Malkoro-McLaren beat the Austrian in the Spanish Grand Prix. Niki came second despite driving with strapped up ribs—which had been broken in an accident near his house in Salzburg. However, it was discovered just after the Spanish Grand Prix that Hunt's car was 5/8th of an inch too wide. He was disqualified and the race was awarded to Lauda. In the following weeks, Niki won the Belgian and Monaco Grand Prix with ease. He had 51 points and Hunt a mere 6. In the Swedish Open, he came third and Hunt finished fifth. Then the scene shifted to the south of France. Lauda dropped out because of engine trouble. Hunt went on to win the race.

Meanwhile, during a conference of the International Federation, it was decided that the Spanish title should be given back to



The start of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway race



Edward Crawford of Illinois won the 1958 Grand Prix of America at Watkins Glen, New York, averaging 88.4 mph for 101.2 miles.

Hunt. The points tally then was Lauda 52, Hunt 26. Then came the tragic race at Nurburgring. After Lauda's near-fatal accident, the race was re-run. Hunt drove to victory, while Lauda fought for his life in the emergency ward of a nearby hospital. It was a golden chance for Hunt and he made no mistake in grabbing it with both hands. He rode to victory in the Dutch Grand Prix and came fourth in the Austrian. He had 56 points to Lauda's 58.

Contrary to everybody's expectations, Lauda and his Ferrari were back within a month for the Italian Grand Prix. Courageous Niki Lauda came fourth in the race; so now, he had 61 points to Hunt's 56. In the meantime, there were bitter quarrels off the course. It was alleged that Hunt's petrol had too high an octane rating. Authorities penalized Hunt by taking points off him. A determined, hardened Hunt dashed to a convincing win in the Canadian Grand Prix and drove an even better race a week later in Watkins Glen, U.S.A. Lauda came eighth in Canada and third in the U.S.A. And so, when eyes focussed on the final race of the season—the Japanese Grand Prix to be run in the shadow of Mount Fujiyama—the score was: Lauda 68 and Hunt 65.

But the pressure had been far too much for the weary Lauda. He dropped out in the second lap of the race. As he later said, "I believed I could win and I really wanted to win. But the conditions were just too dangerous. Where I was, in the tenth place, I simply could not see where I was going. . . . There are more important things to me in

life than the World Championship." Lauda had stretched himself beyond his physical and mental limit. His doctors had advised him not to run in the Japanese Open, for he needed an urgent operation on his right eye which could not close properly after skin grafts. The only person who was happy was Lauda's wife, Marlene. She quickly packed his racing gear and hustled him home to Salzburg!

Hunt came third in the race. He got 4 points for it. The final scores: Hunt 69, Lauda 68. James Hunt was the new World Champion.

A curious psychologist once carried out a survey to see what made racing champions different from other men. An extract from his report reads: "... his IQ is above average and compares favourably with that of university graduates. Judgement good. Above average assessment of his own capabilities and an amazingly accurate awareness of his own performances. At his best under pressure. Under normal conditions, his ability to carry out a task is average. But under stress, the relative speed and quality of his work improves remarkably. The pressure his profession exerts on him is shown by the fact that during the last minute before a major race, the rate of his heart goes up to 150 per minute. During the race, it is 180 to 210 per minute. The basic requirements are concentration, fast reactions, and dedication. . . ."

*Rukmini Mukherjee*

Janet Guthrie, one of the world's top women racing drivers, puts her long hair up so that she can get her helmet on before starting a race at Mineola (Long Island, New York) raceway. She is also an excellent flyer, holding a pilot instructor's licence.



# KAPISH



ANANT PAI  
MOHANDAS

KASHAPU, THE TORTOISE, AND MCTU, THE RABBIT ARE GOOD FRIENDS. ONE DAY AS THEY ARE WALKING NEAR THE SEA—

I'M FEELING HUNGRY, KASHAPU.

ME, TOO. LET'S FIND SOMETHING TO EAT.



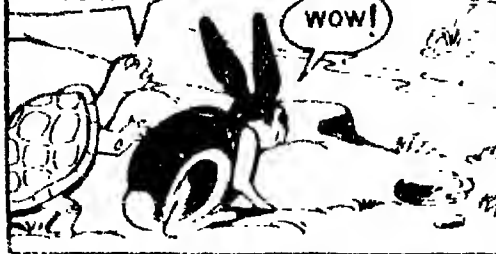
HEY MOTU, WHY DO NOT WE GO ACROSS TO MONSTER ISLAND?

MONSTER ISLAND?



IT'S THAT ISLAND OVER THERE. THEY SAY THERE'S LOTS OF FOOD THERE.

WOW!



BUT I CAN'T SWIM.

I'LL CARRY YOU ON MY BACK.



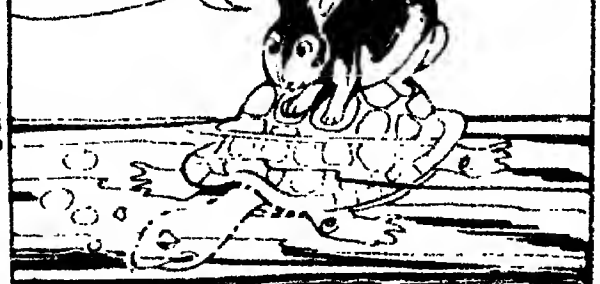
THE TWO FRIENDS SET OUT FOR THE ISLAND.

DON'T GO SO FAST, KASHAPU. I MIGHT FALL OFF.

DON'T WORRY, I WON'T LET YOU DOWN.

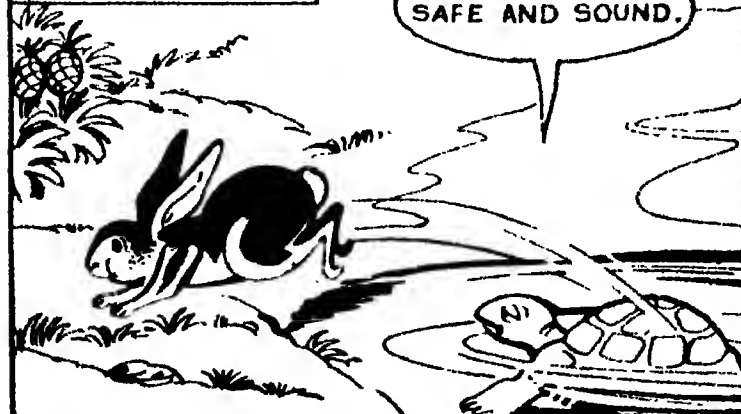


IF AUNT KHARNI SAW ME NOW SHE WOULD SWOON IN FRIGHT.



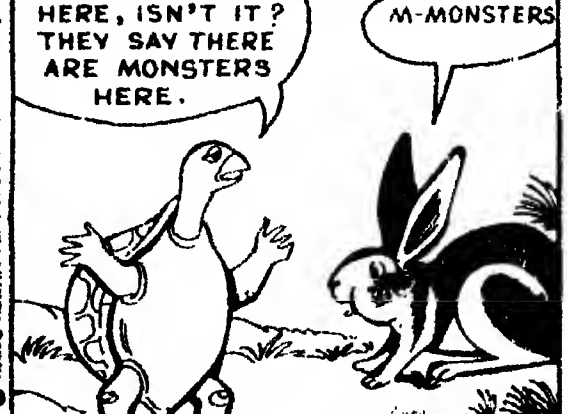
SOME TIME LATER—

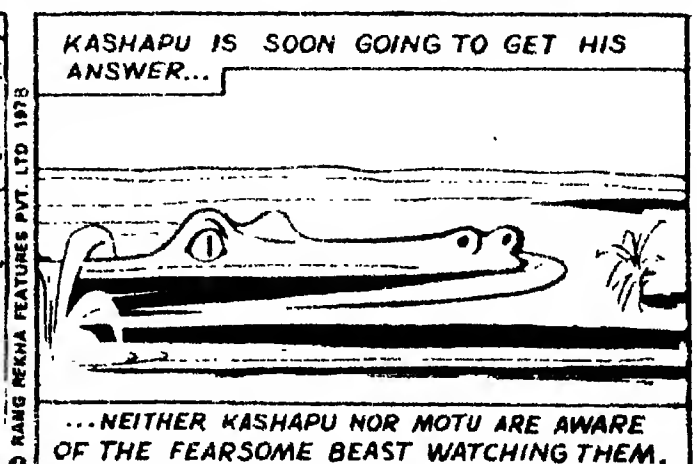
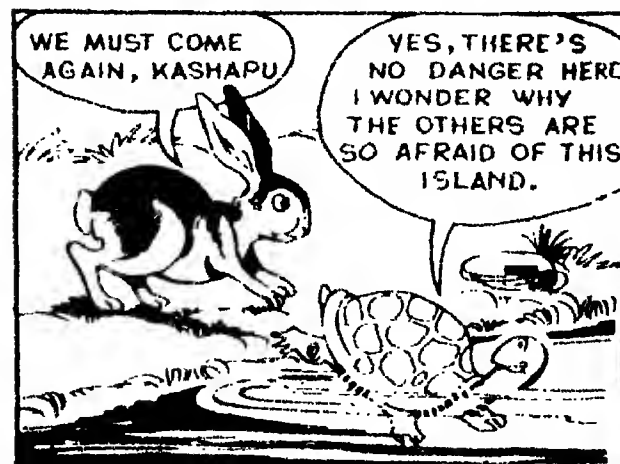
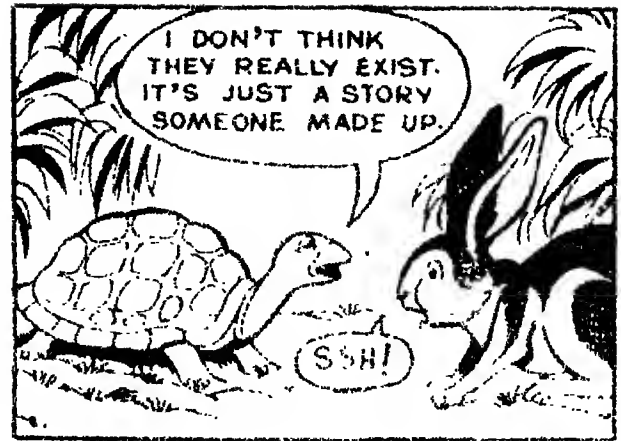
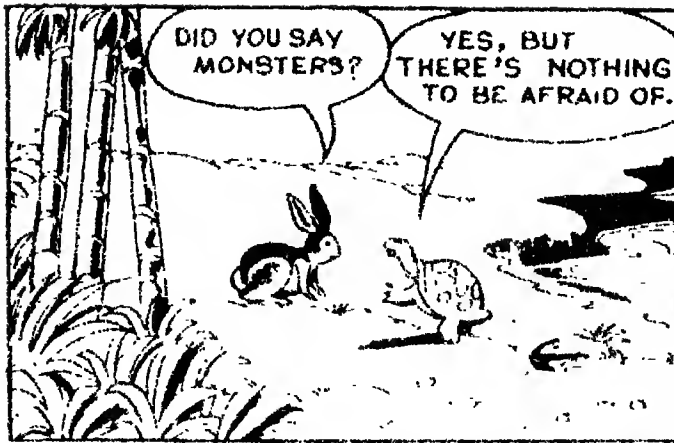
HERE WE ARE, SAFE AND SOUND.



RATHER QUIET HERE, ISN'T IT? THEY SAY THERE ARE MONSTERS HERE.

M-MONSTERS







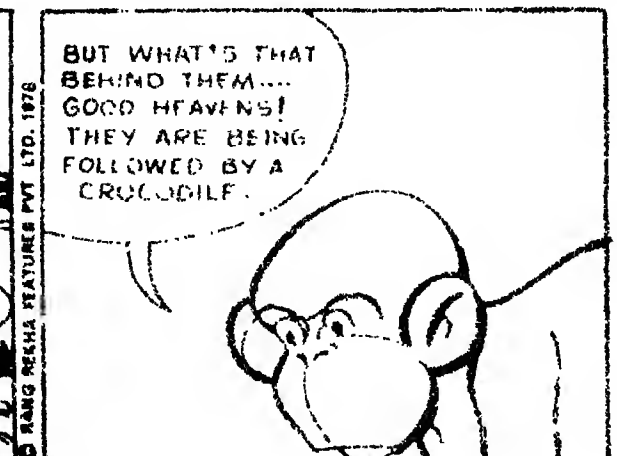
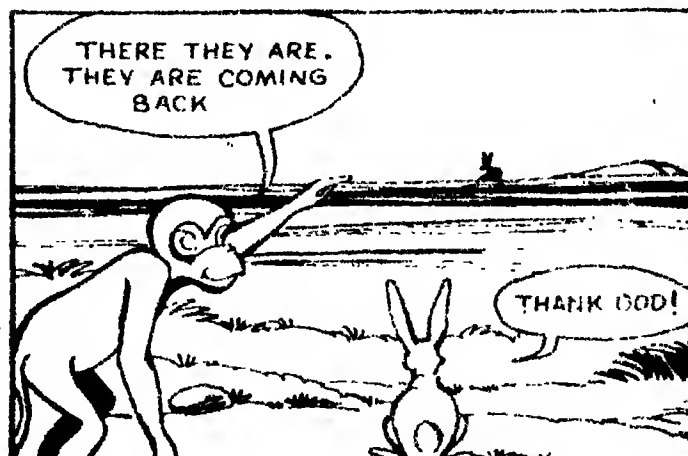
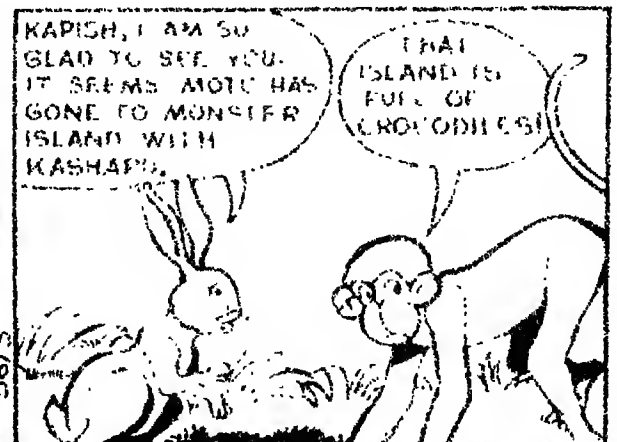
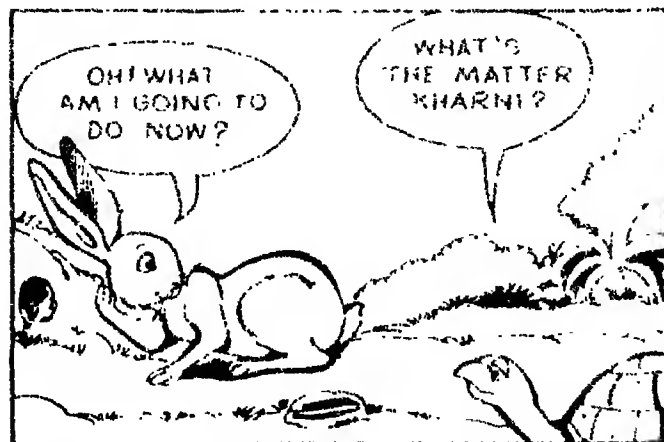
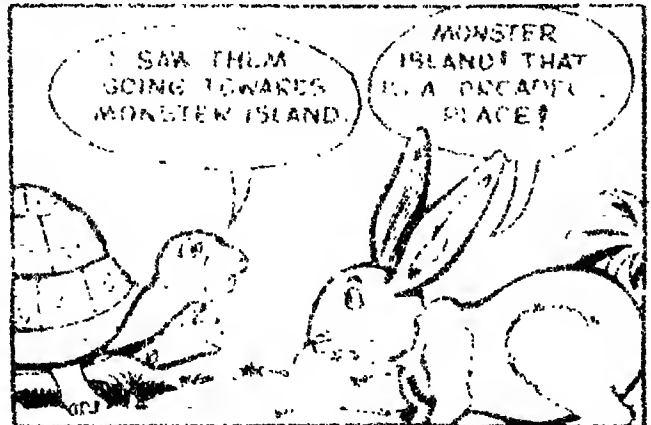
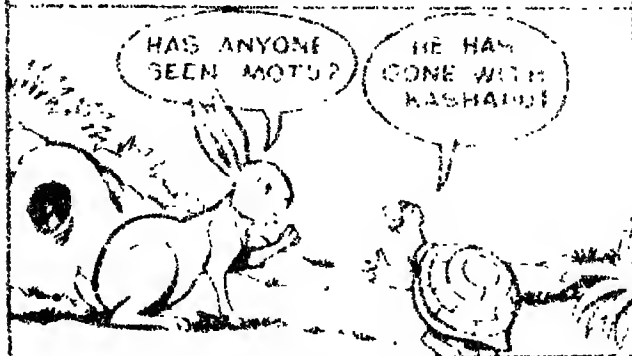
A HUNGRY CROCODILE HAS SPOTTED HIS BREAKFAST.



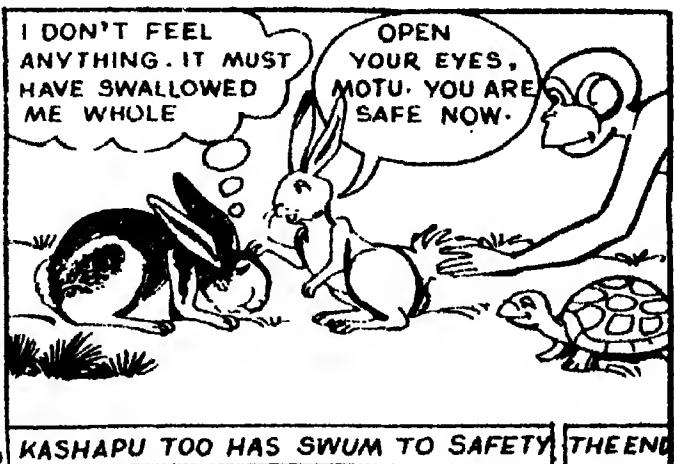
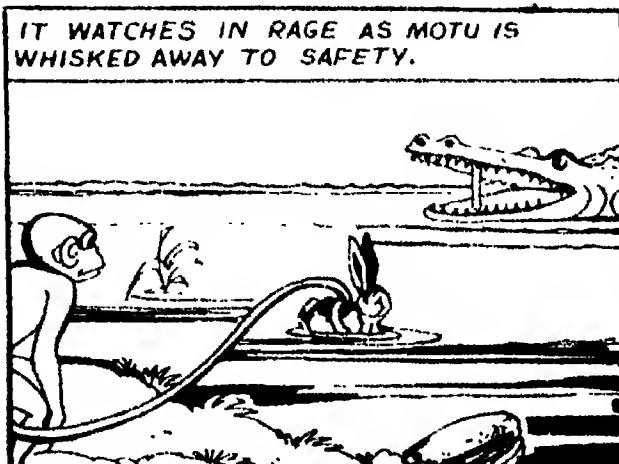
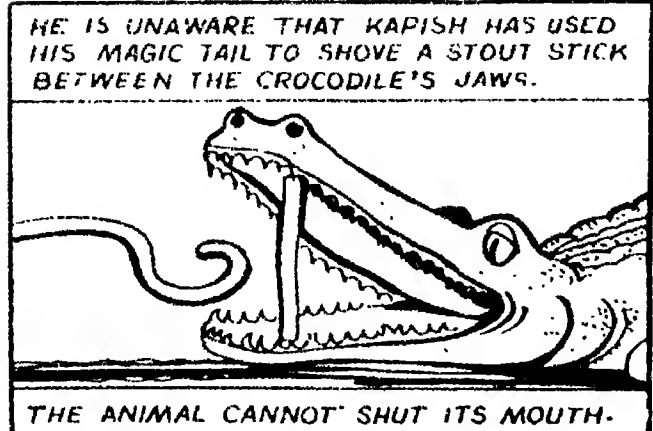
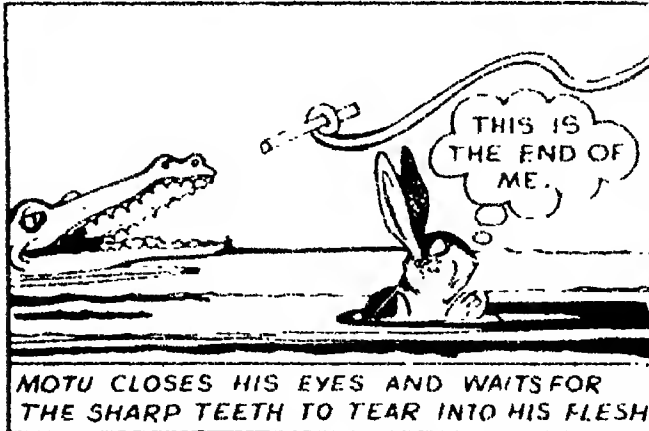
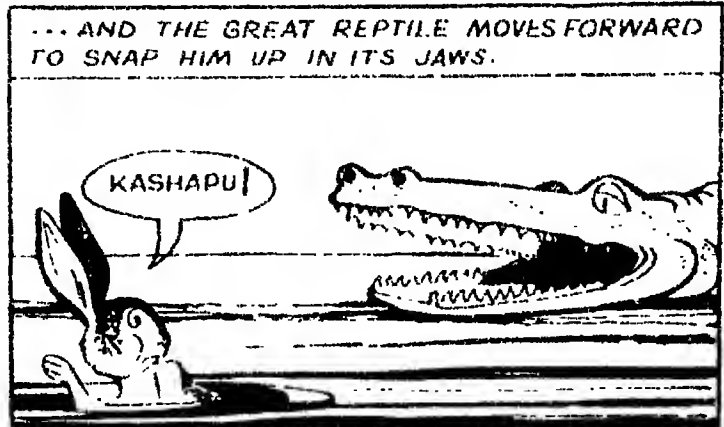
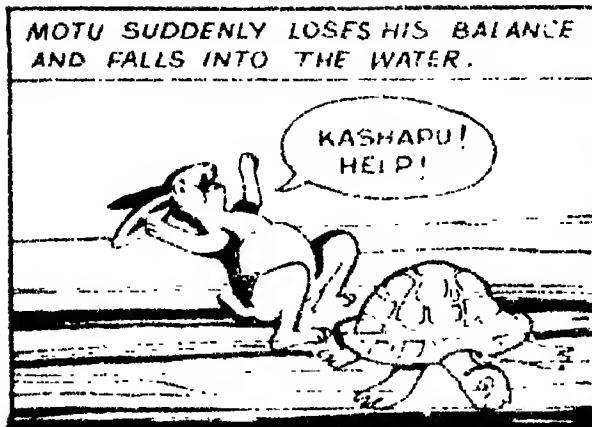
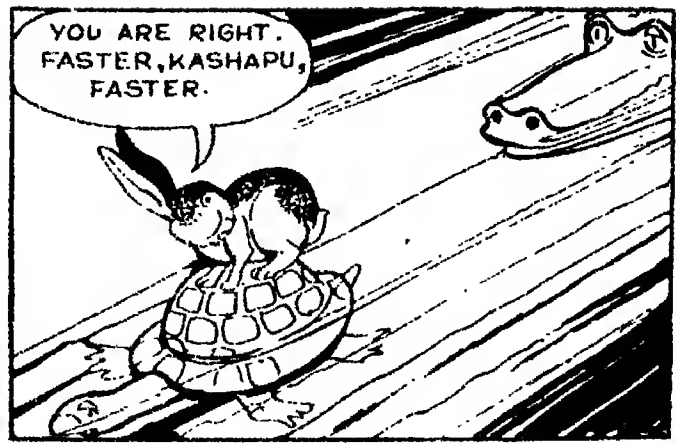
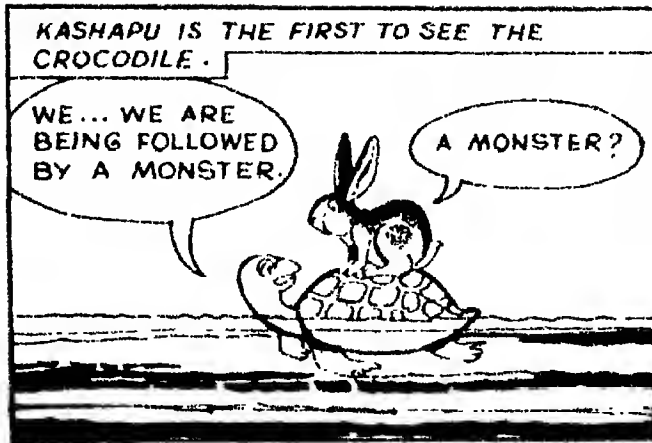
THE GREAT SCALY BODY MOVES FORWARD WITHOUT A SOUND



MEANWHILE ON THE MAIN LAND, KHARNI IS LOOKING FOR HER NEPHEW.







# Argentina, the New Champions

**S**OUTH AMERICA has always been synonymous with world football. Naturally, last month there was not a single soul in that part of the world who did not go hysterical over the 1978 World Cup Football played in Argentina in four modern stadiums in Buenos Aires, Cordoba, Rosario, and Mendoza.

The campaign began on June 1 as an open affair. There were no strong favourites. While the defending champion West Germany was poorer by the absence of the star of the 1974 World Cup, "Kaiser" Franz Beckenbauer, runner-up Holland was handicapped by the absence of their star striker Johann Cruyff. As the Argentine authorities were giving last minute touches to the arrangements, 16 teams chosen from the far corners of the world were bracing themselves up for the grand shows expected of them.

Keeping up the tradition for the fourth time in succession, West Germany and Poland drew their opening match without a score. But the champions showed better speed and leg power in their second match to crush unfancied Mexico 6-0. This assured them of a place in the second round though they drew their third first-round match with Tunisia, again with no score.

Along with West Germany in Group 2 were Poland. After a draw with the champions, Poland beat Tunisia 1-0 and Mexico 3-1, to finish at the top of Group 2.

Italy, Argentina, France, and Hungary were the contenders in Group 1. Italy finished on top winning all the three matches, beating Argentina 1-0, France 2-1, and Hungary 3-1. Argentina beat Hungary 2-1 and France 2-1, to finish second with 4 points. Italy was the only team which won all the first round matches.

In the Group 3 matches, Austria beat Spain 2-1, and Sweden 1-0, but lost to Brazil 0-1. Brazil drew with Sweden 1-1, and Spain 0-0, to secure a berth in the second round, together with Austria. But the performance of the country, which had won the World

Cup three times, was so unimpressive that "King Pelé", who brought the 1970 World Cup to Brazil, openly wept in the stadium, and the coach, Claudio Coutinho, had his effigy burnt by irate fans.

In Group 4 were Peru, Holland, Scotland, and Iran. Iran, of course, was never taken as a strong contender. Peru began powerfully by beating one-time strongmen, Scotland, by a reeling 3-1. Scotland, whose performance was a shattering disappointment, had the additional ignominy of one of its players, Willie Johnston, being sent home on a charge of drug-taking. After a drawn match with Holland, Peru beat Iran 4-1, which included a fine hat-trick by Tcofilo Cubillas. Holland also beat Iran decisively 3-0, all the three goals being scored by Rensenbrink. Scotland,

A 'shot' from the Italy-Hungary tie, which went in favour of Italy, 3-1.



after a 1-1 tie with Iran, rallied all their leg power to beat Holland 3-2. In this match, Holland's irrepressible Rensenbrink scored the first goal in the 34th minute, through a penalty kick, to mark the 1000th goal in World Cup.

The second round groupings were Holland, Italy, West Germany, and Austria in Group A, and Argentina, Brazil, Poland, and Peru in Group B. The grouping proved that Italy's 1-0 victory over Argentina was a doubtful honour. With that win, Italy had to contest with top teams: Holland, West Germany, and Austria, while Argentina's enemies were comparatively poorer Brazil, Poland, and Peru.

Holland made three major changes in their team and fielded what virtually amounted to a new team. In a determined campaign for a berth in the final, they unleashed an all out attack on Austria and beat them 5-1. The Holland-W. Germany match was a 2-2 draw. When Arie netted the first goal in the

match for Holland, German keeper Sepp Maier's 475 minutes at the goal-mouth without conceding a goal ended. The last time he conceded a goal was in the 1974 World Cup Final. The previous record of 438 minutes was held by England's Gordon Banks. But the 1974 runners-up beat powerful Italy 2-1, in a match decided more by luck than by ball control and powerful shots.

The W. Germany-Italy match was a goalless tie, but there was plenty of football there, in every sense of the term. Austria, shattered by Holland, however, proved too good for W. Germany, and the champions lost 2-3. Italy beat Austria 1-0. Thus with 5 points from 3 matches, Holland once again made their entry into the World Cup final.

In Group B, things were different. In their match against Poland, Argentina was handicapped by the absence due to injury of one of their star striker pair, Leopoldo

Swedish inside left Thomas Sjoborg is seen scoring the first goal for his team, while the ball is tackled by Brazil's Amaral (right) and Edinho (left). Rushing to the spot is Sweden's Lennart Larsson. Sweden and Brazil drew 1-1.



and Luque. But Mario Kempes, the other super star, more than made good for this by sending two powerful shots into the rival net. But the host country had strong contenders in Brazil, who had almost overnight changed into the powerful team that it was in 1970 and 1974. In an all out fight, they beat Peru 3-0, two of them through dazzling long shots by Direcn, which came into the net like bullets. The much-awaited, much-trumpeted Argentina-Brazil match ended goalless. Tempers began running high in both camps. While Brazil beat Poland 3-1 in the last match, Argentina crushed Peru 6-0. Thus, though both Argentina and Brazil ended with 5 points each, Argentina entered the final by virtue of their better goal average. Brazil's fate was thus decided not as much by their own matches as by the humiliating defeat of Peru. No wonder furious Brazilians called them "traitors of football".

As the day for the all important final approached, every single Argentinian went hysterical. Cries of 'Ar-Gen-Tina' rent the air in Buenos Aires day in and day out.

The first few minutes of the final produced little interesting football. The pressure of keeping up the hopes of millions of fans seemed to weigh on the players. The huge support of the home crowd, 80,000 of whom had occupied every vantage point of the River Plate Stadium, finally inspired Mario Kempes to score the first goal in the 37th

minute. The weight relaxed from the players and legs began moving with wind-speed. Several powerful attacks were made at rival goal-mouths. But it was only in the 81st minute that Holland equalised through Jan Poortuliet. During extra time, however, Kempes scored again to make it 2-1 for Argentina and Daniel Bertomisen completed the tally. Argentina won 3-1 to gain the coveted World Cup for the first time and to join the previous champions Brazil (3 times), Italy, Uruguay, and Germany (twice each), and England.

Mario Kempes, who scored 6 goals in seven matches, remained the top scorer and the most glamorous player of the 1978 World Cup. But he is yet to reach the heights of Pele, Beckenbauer and Cruyff. Perhaps Argentina owed its victory more to their brilliant goalkeeper Valdo Fillo.

Brazil, who beat Italy, to gain the third place, ended without losing a single match, the only team with that record in the 1978 World Cup.

The World Cup, the most popular sports event of the World, which cost nearly \$ 700,000 to Argentina, is estimated to have been watched, at least in part, by 1.5 billion of the world's 4 billion population. Its record of 2,728 satellite broadcast/reception hours beat the 2,600 hours of the Montreal Olympics.

*Radhakrishnan*

*(Next month: Wimbledon Winners)*

## HOW and WHY

**Satyaprakash Das (16) of Bhadrak, Orissa, asks: The Far Eastern people, like the Japanese and the Koreans, are known to have been eating seafood for a long time. How did they gather seafood before modern diving equipment was discovered?**

Just a little more than ten or twelve years ago, this question was receiving a lot of attention from scientists and was an active subject of research with them. The divers, they found, were mostly women living on the coasts of Korea and Japan and numbered some thirty thousand. They also belong-

ed to the very low income group.

The divers, called Amas, are of two types. The Cachido and the Funado. The Cachido ama took a raft or a float to the sea, held on to it and took several deep breaths and then dived to a depth of fifteen to twenty feet. She stayed at the bottom gathering food (in a sack tied to her body) for about 15 seconds and then rapidly surfaced again. So, on an average, a Cachido ama spent about 30 seconds in the water. On surfacing, she held on to the raft and rested for another thirty seconds before taking a second plunge. The

Funado ama, on the other hand, dived to deeper seabeds (60–80 feet) and was assisted by a helper who remained on the raft. The manner of diving was, however, the same, with the one difference that the Funado ama carried a heavy stone (tied to her body) in order to quicken her descent. Before surfacing, she untied the chord holding the stone to her body and thus came up quickly.

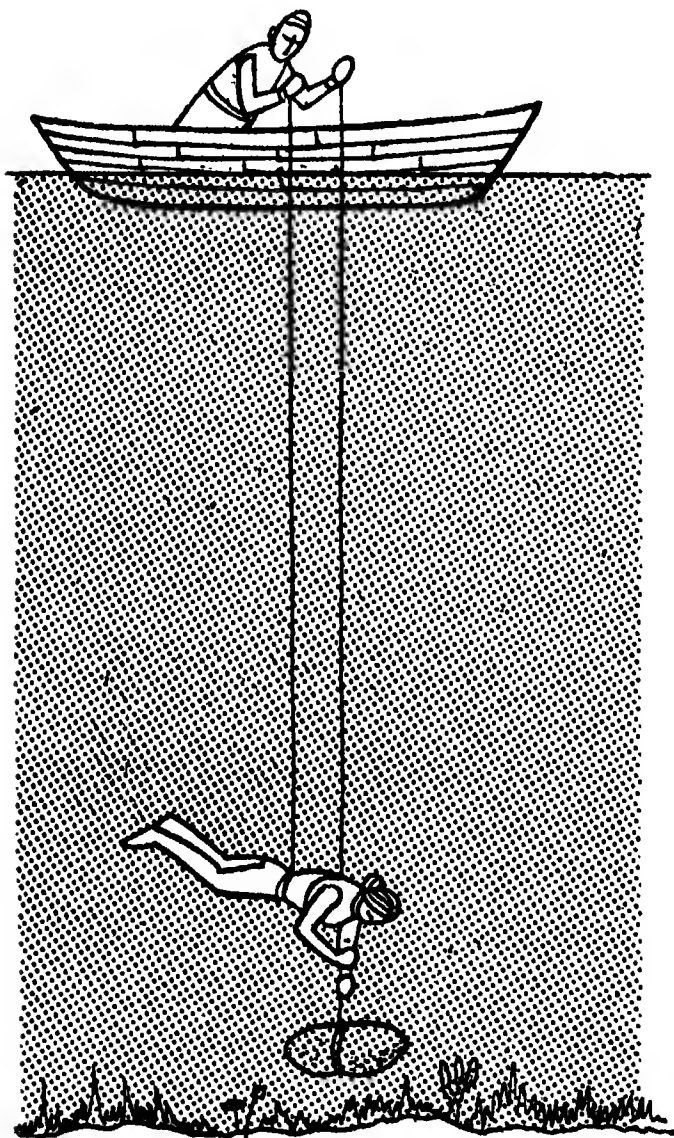
When experiments were done on them, it was found that the amas had developed a larger lung capacity than the average human being, and when diving they did not fill all of it with air. This was found very sensible because below a depth of ten feet or so, the hydrostatic water pressure compressed her chest and, therefore, her lung volume also. The depth to which she could

go was limited by the amount of lung compression she could tolerate. If she dived deeper than this, she was subject to a painful lung squeeze, which could cause the pulmonary blood vessels to burst. This was followed inevitably by death. So an ama really learnt through practice how to protect herself. Another technique evolved by the ama that has not been very clearly understood is that of hyperventilation on surfacing. The ama generally pursed her lips and emitted a loud whistle with each expiration of breath. She did this for about 15 seconds before diving again.

This method of 'diving for food but surviving' was practised by the amas for centuries, with only occasional accidents. When diving equipment was put to use about a century back, some accidents did occur. But now the equipment has been made safe, and the amas have learnt how to use it without any danger to their person.

In contrast to the amas, the ancient pearl divers along the coasts of Madras and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the Persian Gulf did not learn to survive very well. They used to clip their noses before entering the water and worked at the bottom from 30 seconds to as much as six minutes. And their labours were rarely rewarded. The strain was apparently too much to tolerate for long and they were generally believed to have been short-lived. The amas, on the other hand, were normal healthy women, ate twice as much as any other person, had remarkable resistance to the cold temperatures of the deep sea, and, lived long enough to be proud mothers and grandmothers!

*Meera Ramakrishnan*



## HURRY UP !

If you haven't already sent in your coupon for enrolment as a member of the Children's World Pen-friends Club, hurry up ! The next batch of names of members will appear in the issue for September.

Also watch for a new, exciting science-fiction.—Editor



## A PAGE FROM HISTORY

**H**AVE you ever been to the hills of Mandu? The town is about 100 km from Indore. One can reach there from Indore by road. The place is dotted with historical palaces, which still look very beautiful. Let me tell you who had built them.

Mandu was a part of the Malwa kingdom. Baz Bahadur became its ruler in 1556. At that time Akbar was the Mughal emperor in Delhi. Baz Bahadur had to fight his brothers, who tried to oust him so that they could themselves become the rulers. After defeating them, he attacked Gond where Rani Durgavati was the Queen. She was both powerful and wise. Baz Bahadur met with defeat at her hands. Ashamed at losing to a woman, he decided to give up fighting and to retire to a peaceful and quiet life. So, he shifted to Mandu.

## RANI ROOP MATI

Now, Roop Mati was the daughter of a Rajput chieftain called Dhan Singh. Though born in Sarangpur village near Ujjain, she spent most of her childhood at Dharampuri, which was situated on the Narmada.

She grew up to be a great dancer, singer, and composer. But what she liked most was to play on the 'Veena'. She worshipped the goddess Rewa before she did anything.

One evening, Roop Mati had gone to bathe in the Narmada. There she was singing along with her friend, Malvika, when Baz Bahadur, who was out hunting, passed that way and happened to hear her lovely voice.

He stopped to find out who was singing. And when he saw the beautiful Roop Mati, he fell in love with her. His men, to please their king, suggested that she be taken away



by force. But Baz Bahadur halted them. Instead, he went to her and told her that he was very attracted by her singing and charm, and would like to marry her.

When her father, Dhan Singh, heard of the incident, he got very annoyed. He locked up Roop Mati in a room. He even sent her poison so that she would die before dawn.

Roop Mati, without any hesitation, took the poison. But, nothing happened to her. The goddess Rewa appeared in a dream and asked her to go to Mandu. She promised Roop Mati that she would be with her in the form of a river flowing through the hills of Mandu and would take care of her.

When Baz Bahadur came to see her secretly, Roop Mati related the dream to him. He immediately promised that he would have the river flow through Mandu.

So Roop Mati left her parents and went to Mandu. She and Baz Bahadur spent most of their time composing songs and going on hunts and picnics. Roop Mati proved to be an excellent rider and a good shot.

For her sake, Baz Bahadur built two palaces, Jahaz Mahal and Champa Baoli, both near big water tanks. Jahaz Mahal, as the name suggests, looks very much like a ship.

Baz Bahadur also built for her a beautiful pavilion, which is still known after Roop Mati. Every day, she would go to the top of this pavilion to take a look at the distant temple of goddess Rewa on the banks of the Narmada. She would say her prayers and only then eat her food. On those days when it rained and the temple could not be seen clearly from Mandu, in accordance with Baz Bahadur's orders, a bright light used to be burnt from the top of the temple.

Their life of luxury and pleasure, alas, could not last very long. Akbar sent his trusted general, Adham Khan, with a large army to capture Malwa.

Baz Bahadur had never looked after his state's affairs or kept a proper army. The Mughal soldiers defeated the Malwa army quickly. Baz Bahadur fled to Burhanpur, but Roop Mati ended her life by taking poison. She did not want to live after the defeat of her forces.

*R. T. Shahani*

## **The Autobiography of a Rupee**

**I** AM now an old coin. I was in circulation for many, many years. Slowly, both my faces got dulled and worn out. The Lion's head on one side is completely rubbed off, with the years of hard work I have done.

In my younger days, I was a very handsome and shiny coin. I began my life with a rather humble owner. I was given to a clerk in a government office. When I reached his hands, he looked at me with great curiosity. He banged me on the table a number of times to make sure whether I was a real coin or a counterfeit. When he was satisfied of my genuineness, he remarked, "Ha, ha! It's a long time since I saw a shiny new coin."

He put me in his pocket, and I got mixed up with many other coins there. Some of them were slightly bright ones, but the rest were quite old. But, none of them was as good as me.

The younger ones felt jealous of me. They managed to push me out of the pocket. I fell on the ground. By rolling on the ground, I tried to make as much noise as possible, so that my master would notice my fall. But, he ignored me. I lay there on the ground for a whole night, until a little urchin picked me up.

From then on, I passed through rather dirty hands. But my shine did not wear off. Soon I was exchanged for some sweets and reached a higher class of society. I was kept snugly in a wallet. But, then, the wallet was stolen by a pickpocket. He collected all the money in it and threw the purse away. He took me home, but misplaced me by keeping me under his oily stove. Months later, when I was found, he took me to a shopkeeper, who hurt my feelings by saying that he would not accept me because I was all dirty. I was then given to a bank which sent me back to the place where I was born—the mint. I am now to get reincarnated. So, here I am, waiting for my chance to become clean and shiny once again.

I do hope to see your wallet soon.

*Nissan Joseph (12)  
India*



# KANGOO

## THE LAZY KANGAROO

**K**ANGOO was a baby Kangaroo, who lived in the local zoo. Kangoo lived there with his mother, father, a brother and a sister.

Kangoo was a shy little fellow. He rarely left his mother's pouch. His brother and sister teased him about it. "Mama's boy" they called him. But Kangoo could not be bothered. With one wee paw he covered his eyes, and from a chink behind it, he peeked at the world. The other paw he stuffed into his mouth, and kept it there

till mealtimes.

Papa Kangaroo did not approve of this arrangement. He would scold Kangoo and say, "Come out, son. How will your tail be strong enough to take your weight? You need exercise."

"Haw, haw, Fatso," cried his brother. "Fatso, come out, let's see you waddle," said his sister.

"Well," thought Kangoo, "I am plump, but not that much. Otherwise, how can Mama jump about so easily?"

But Kangoo knew he was just plain lazy. He would have liked to go and play and run about. But, if Mama took him around so happily, why should he tire himself?

And so, day after day he sat in the pouch, peeping at the world through his paws. He saw the people who came to the zoo. He could see them teasing the monkeys in the next enclosure, mercilessly. Even the ostrich opposite were not left alone by these baby humans. They tried to catch them through the wire mesh.

Kangoo was very fascinated by these 'children', as they seemed to be called. They came in hordes, usually on school picnics, wearing their uniforms. With them would be a fat lady or a thin bespectacled man. They would invariably look frustrated and say things like, "Children, don't break the line," or "Children, where is Vikram?"—



or something like that. Kangoo would then urge his mother to go and sit in a corner near the wire mesh of their enclosure. That way he could watch these fascinating creatures.

One afternoon, Kangoo's mother took a nap while he sat in the pouch—wide awake. Grinning, he watched his brother and sister play 'Jump Away'. Both of them leapt up together and at the same time tried to see who jumped the highest. It seemed to be great fun, jumping, and laughing, and shouting, and trying to trip one another. But Kangoo would not go and join them. No, sir, he would not.

Just then a little boy came dashing up to their enclosure. "Kangaroos, Mama!" he shouted. "Look, Shonu, kangaroos!" He danced up and down.

Kangoo's brother and sister, distracted by the voice, stopped their game. They both went closer to the wire net, so that the little boy could admire them. Kangoo saw the boy put his hand through the wire net to touch his sister. 'That seems nice,' thought Kangoo. 'I wonder what the boy's hand feels like. Will it be soft, like Mama's pouch?' But move from Mama's pouch he would not.

Soon, a pretty little girl came traipsing down to join the boy. Kangoo looked and looked. 'What a pretty girl!' he thought. 'Plump like I am. And what a pretty white frock, white shoes and socks!' he described her to himself, removing his paw from his eyes.

The girl was holding her mother's hand. 'Just like I sit in Mama's pouch,' he thought. He looked at the girl's family.

The little boy was telling his sister, "See, Shonu, kangaroos like in your Nursery Rhyme book."

"Kangaloo, kangaloo," cried Shonu and clapped her hands.

'What a clever girl!' thought Kangoo, fascinated by her clapping.

The girl's Papa picked her up and put her on his shoulders. Dangling her legs against his chest and clapping, she kept saying, "Kangaloo, kangaloo."

Kangoo raised himself in his Mama's pouch to see what she would do next. But Mama was asleep. Who would take him

closer to the little girl?

For the first time, he felt like going close to the fence on his own.

"Look, Akshu, Shonu," the children's mother called to them and pointing Kangoo to them, she said, Look, there's a baby kangaroo in his mama's pouch."

"He's so fat, Mama," said Akshu. "Will he come if I call him?"

"Well, call out and see," replied his mother.

"Hey, you, Kangaroo! Hey, Baby Kangaroo—ooooo, come and shake hands with me," Akshu said.

'What to do, what to do!' thought Kangoo. 'I'm so tempted to go, but I've never even tried to get out. How can I be bold enough now?'

"He's not coming, Mama," said Akshu disappointed. "Why isn't he coming?"

"Maybe he's too young," replied his mother.

"But he's so fat. He can't be a baby," exclaimed Akshu. "You call him, Shonu, maybe he'll come," he told his little sister.

Kangoo craned his neck to see what they were saying and doing. Shonu had got off her Papa's shoulders. She put her hand through the wire net and called to Kangoo, "Come, come, Kangaroo!"

'I want to, I want to come and be friends with you, Shonu,' said Kangoo silently to himself. 'Should I wake up Mama and ask her to take me? . . . . No, no, she would not like her nap to be disturbed. Oh, I want to go, I want to go, I want to go,' he thought desperately.

"Come, Kangaroo," Shonu was still calling.

So little Kangoo made a brave decision. 'I will hop to Shonu,' he decided. So he took his paw out of his mouth, took a deep breath into his lungs, and out he jumped from the pouch.

'PLOP', he fell on his head on the soft mud. Little Akshu and Shonu seemed to be really thrilled.

"He's coming!" said Akshu. "He's coming!"

Kangoo got up, blinked the mud out of his eyes and took one little hop.

'Hey—wow!' he thought. 'I can actually jump, like a kangaroo—no, like a kanga-

loo?' he lisped like Shonu.

Hop, hop he went on his way to the fence, and all of a sudden, there was a lot of noise.

His brother and sister were gaping at him. His sister was shouting, "Hey, Mama ... look who's hopping."

Mama and Papa sat up to see.

Hop, hop, leapt Kangoo, very thrilled with himself. Every leap he took, he jumped higher.

'Look, Shonu, I'm coming,' he said to himself, grinning away.

Shonu too clapped her hands in glee. "He jump for me, he jump for me," she lisped.

'Oh, what fun!' thought Kangoo. 'How happy I am. How happy Akshu and Shonu are. What a good little kangaroo I am!'

Just as he reached the fence, Shonu

started singing in her babyish voice the nicest nursery rhyme.

'Meant specially for me,' thought Kangoo, when he heard....

"Led, gleen, blue,

Dirty Kangaroo,

Sitting on a woomba boomba tree,

Doing number two."

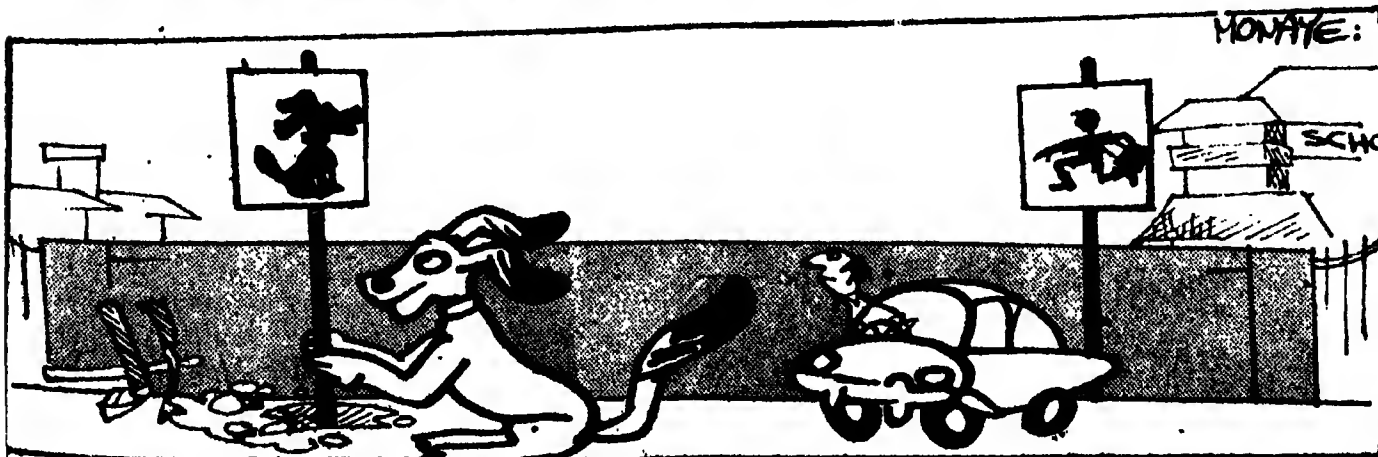
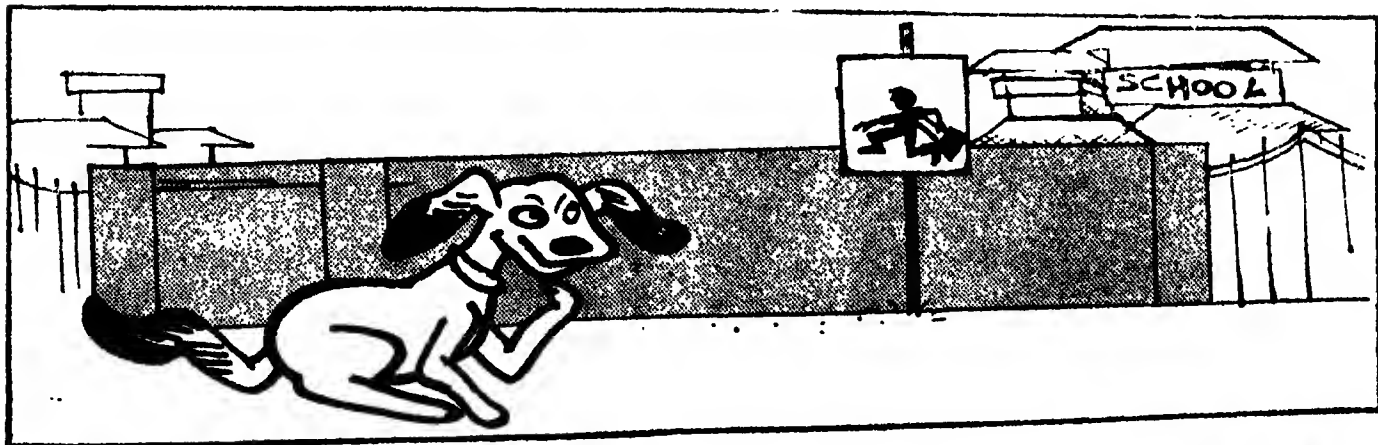
'Haw, haw!' laughed Kangoo's brother and sister at the song.

Even Papa and Mama kangaroo were smiling.

'But,' thought Kangoo, 'they are smiling more because at last, "fat, lazy, baby elephant-Kangoo" has taken a walk.' So happy was Kangoo that he kept leaping higher and higher into the air, landing gracefully each time on his little tail, showing off to Akshu and Shonu.

Vaijayanti Savant

## ANIMAL WORLD



**C**HINTU's family was enjoying a relaxed Sunday breakfast. The unusual quiet made his father ask, "Where's Chintu, this morning?"

"Having a bath, Papa," replied Chintu's elder sister, Chitra.

"Bath! On a Sunday. What's he upto?" Chintu's father inquired suspiciously.

"Meetha's nephew and niece are expected this morning. And he has told Chintu to look his best," Chitra snorted.

"Meetha's what? How old are the nephew and niece, when uncle is just ten!" Chintu's mother remarked laughingly.

With bits of toast in his mouth, Chintu replied, "I have to meet Rita and Raju. I'm late. I must hurry."

"And who are these important people you have to meet so urgently?" Chitra, still angry at the 'waste' of her powder, asked sarcastically.

"They are Meetha's nephew and niece. They have already arrived. I saw them from my window."

Chintu edged upto the door. Suddenly, he shot out of the room, shouting. "See you at lunch, Mama."

He raced straight up to his friends' room.

# THE BABY SITTERS

The conversation at the table was interrupted, as Chintu breezed in. His face looked whitish and his hair, tightly combed back, almost dripped with oil.

"My god! Look at your face. Where did you get that much of powder? Have you used my talcum? Whoever told you to do that?" Chitra exclaimed in one breath.

"That finishes my new bottle of hair cream," sighed his father.

Chintu's mother was more amused than angry at her son's make-up. She said, "Have you seen yourself in the mirror, Chintu?"

Unmindful of the protests, and rude remarks on his appearance, Chintu hurried to the table, picked up two toasts and turned to rush out.

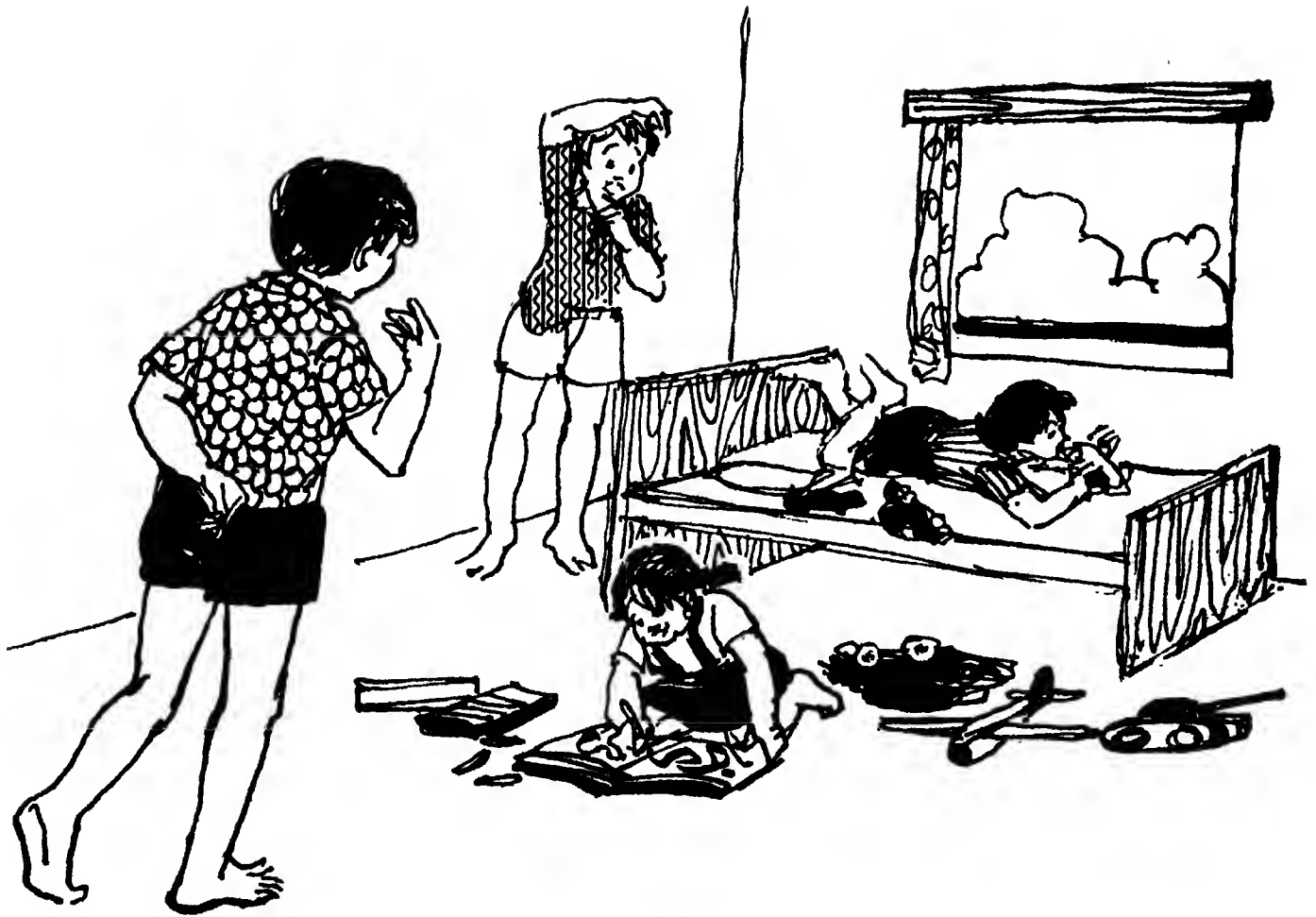
"Have your breakfast properly, before you go out," said his mother.

The scene there shocked him. Meetha was standing quietly in a corner. His eyes were wide open, his face had a very nervous, agitated expression. He had covered his ears with both hands.

A three-year-old girl, obviously Rita, was drawing wild patterns on Meetha's sums exercise book, with the help of his paint-box. Her brother Raju, about five, was lying on his stomach, on Meetha's bed. Meetha's favourite collection, cars, lorries, tractor and tanker, was scattered on the bed.

Raju was engineering a violent collision between a small lorry and a tiny car. For full effect, he was emitting a sound, which seemed to be a mixture of the red Indian war cry and the roaring of a Jumbo jet.

Chintu surveyed the scene, and then looked back at his dazed friend. Meetha,



gaining some confidence from the arrival of Chintu, came over to him quickly.

"Mama has gone out with their parents. She told me to play with them. And now look, what they are doing to my toys. Save my lorry and car at least, Chintu," he requested.

Chintu moved by the appeal, decided to act. In one long dive, he landed on the bed, and snatched the toys from Raju's hand. He tossed them toward Meetha before Raju could retaliate.

Unfortunately, Meetha was not prepared for such quick action by Chintu. He caught the lorry but missed the car. It fell on the sums book Rita was painting on. Meetha bent down to pick it up. The little girl thought that he was trying to snatch her copy and the brush. She let out a big howl, "Mummy, mummy!"

Raju already angry, joined his sister and cried louder.

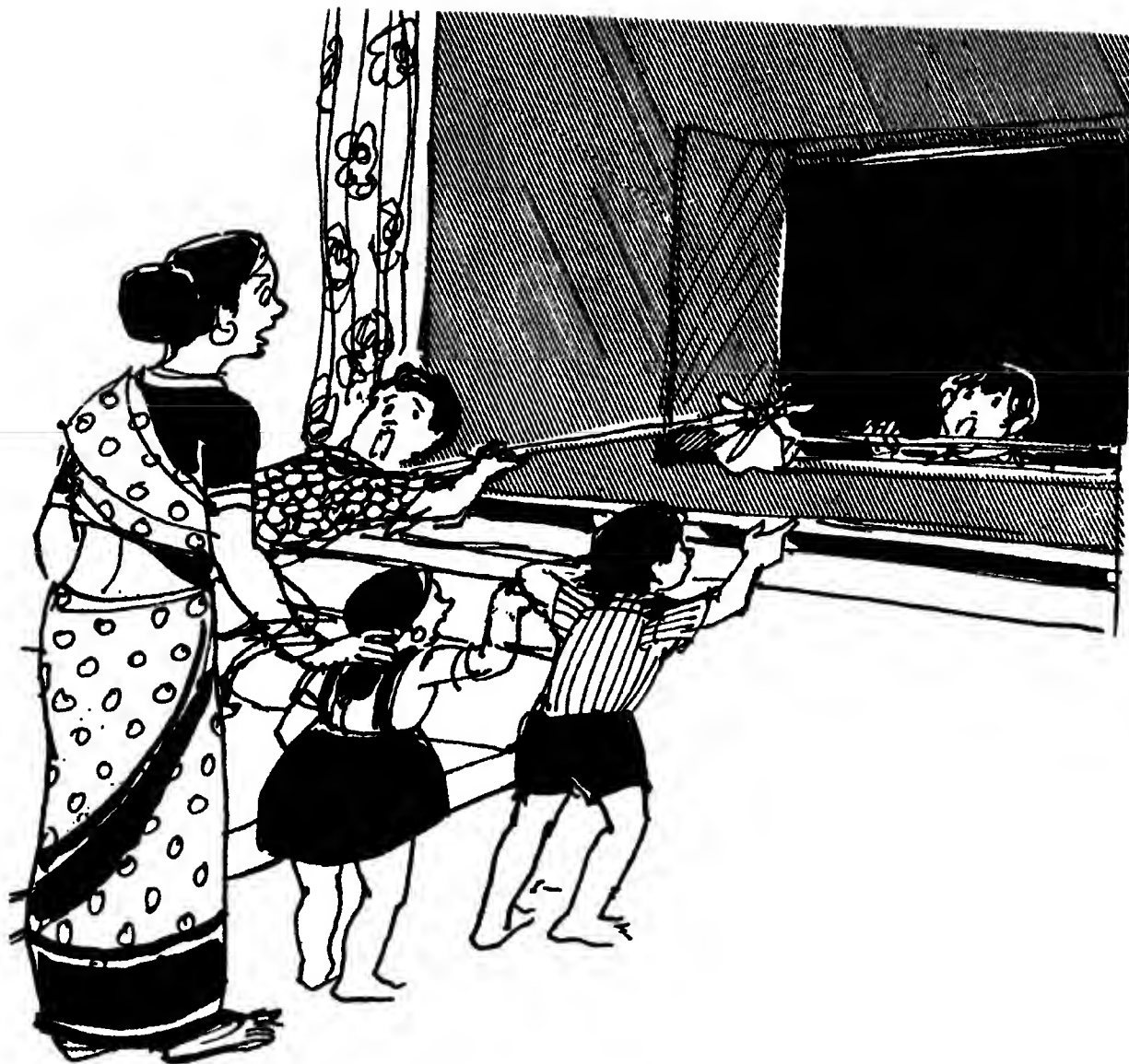
Chintu and Meetha, sensing that the situation was getting out of control, fled from the room. They raced to the back-garden, and climbed up a low tree. It was their usual hiding place after doing something naughty.

"What do you think they will tell?" Meetha asked, after perching himself comfortably on a branch.

"Worried about yourself? It's me, they are going to blame," Chintu breathed after his attack and escape was quite irritated.

"Sh, sh. . . .," hissed Meetha, "don't speak. I can see them coming." He had spotted Rita and Raju, walking toward the garden. They were looking about, obviously searching for Meetha and Chintu.

The two friends clambered a bit higher up the tree. Right then the grownups returned. Rita and Raju rushed back to the house, both shouting complaints. Chintu seeing that no one was around, climbed



down and ran home. Meetha left alone, slowly started back for lunch, thinking of the various excuses he would give his mother.

Lunch was over. Chintu heaved a sigh. No one had come from Meetha's to complain about him, everything must be alright, he thought. But, to be quite sure, he decided to go up to his room and shout for Meetha.

He was glad to see Meetha already at the bedroom window, obviously looking out for him.

"Hey, is everything alright? What did they say?" he asked Meetha.

"Don't talk of them. Crooks. Get me some food, quickly," Meetha answered.

"What? Food! Why?" Chintu was confused.

"Because, I am hungry, very hungry."

"Didn't you have lunch?" Chintu asked.

"No, no, no! Now, don't ask questions. Get me food!" snapped Meetha.

"From where? And why didn't you have lunch?" Chintu persisted with questions.

"I am 'collapsing' with hunger, and you are asking questions. Go and get some food!"

"Why don't you go down and eat?" suggested Chintu.

"How can I go down, if my door is locked from the outside?" said Meetha.

"You are locked in your room." Ho ho, ha, ha, laughed Chintu.

"Laughing, are you, while I am 'collapsing' from hunger?" Meetha protested.

"Tell me what happened, and I will get you some food." Chintu blackmailed his friend.



From what Meetha said, it seemed that Raju and Rita were bent on getting their uncle punished. Meetha's mummy had brought a chocolate for Rita and a lollipop for Raju. On his way back to the house from the garden, Meetha had met Rita eating her chocolate.

"I just wanted a small bit of it," he told Chintu. "So I took it from her and tried to break a small portion, but most of it came into my hand. What could I do? I kept whatever naturally came in my hand, and returned the rest. But, she started crying, and said that I had taken all her chocolate. Liar, you know."

Meetha had then rushed away and nearly collided with Raju, who was standing in the verandah licking his lollipop. Meetha offered him a bit of chocolate, in exchange for one suck of lollipop. The deal was struck, but unfortunately the lollipop broke into half when Meetha put it in his mouth.

"I couldn't spit that out, could I, Chintu?"

Chintu agreed that he could not have done so. "But what happened then?" he asked.

"Well, they cried and cried. My mummy locked me up, and didn't give me any lunch," Meetha wailed.

So, Chintu tip-toed to the dining room, opened the frig, and took out some bread for his friend. Then he went up to his room and tied the bread to a pole, which they often used for exchanging toys and chocolates. Chintu thrust the pole out towards Meetha's bedroom-window.

"Hey, what's that game? We will play it, too." Chintu turned round to see who was speaking. He saw his mother, Raju and Rita entering his room.

"What are you doing, Chintu?" asked his mother.

Meetha spotting her, in the meantime, had ducked down and disappeared from his window.

"Nothing," said Chintu looking very innocent.

"But, you have bread on the pole!" Rita was busy inspecting everything. "Are you feeding the birds?"

"What birds are there?" asked Raju, trying to spot them outside the window.

"Yes, yes, I am feeding parrots," said Chintu, glad that Rita had given him a good idea.

"Parrots!" smiled his mother. Then she said, "Why don't you whistle for your parrot, Chintu. Whistle for it."

Chintu had to whistle. Meetha heard him. He thought everything was okay. He popped up at the window, ready to catch the food.

"So that's the parrot," laughed Chintu's mother. "Don't worry, Meetha," she called out. "I'll ask your mother to release you now. Come over, and have tea with me."

"Promise, aunty," Meetha clapped, all smiles.

"Promise, mama." Chintu caught hold of her hand. Even Raju and Rita forgetting all their earlier fights said, "Let Meetha uncle come for tea, please."

It didn't take long for Meetha to join them in the dining room. He attacked with gusto the plate Chintu's mother set before him.

Raju and Rita climbed up on the table. Chintu stood on the back of Meetha's chair. Together, the three attacked the food on Meetha's plate.

*Vijay Dutt*

## GOD

While we are sleeping  
I know you are watching,  
In the darkness of the night,  
In the brightness of daylight.  
Oh, God, give us eyesight  
That is keen and bright,  
Give us good ears  
Which we can use for years.  
Give us hands which are strong  
To do things right and not wrong.  
Oh, God, give us a good mouth  
To say not lies but only truth.  
God, bless us with a life which is long,  
A life as merry as a song.

*Sreedevi Sukumar (11)  
India*



## ‘The Girl in Mid-air’

**M**Y brother-in-law, Mr. Choudhuri, summed up Roy the Mystic’s miracle act thus:

“Out of a pack of 52 different playing cards, one was selected freely and at random, without looking at its face. So none of us knew what card it was. We then rang up the magician and asked him whether he could identify a card if we placed it face down on our phone. He said he could try. We placed the chosen card face down on the mouthpiece for half-a-minute and then asked him what card it was. He said it was the Queen of Hearts. It was only then that we ourselves looked at the card for the first time. And it was the Queen of Hearts!”

It was a simple trick. When I was alone with the pack of cards in my brother-in-law’s house, I had separately and differently marked the back of all the cards with two small dots with my dot pen, one dot (according to its position in the design) telling me the suit (clubs, hearts, spades, or diamonds) and the other telling me the value (ace, two, three, four. . . . . Jack, Queen, King, etc). The dots were so small and so mixed up with the design on the back of the cards, that only I could notice them because I knew the cards had been marked on the back and also knew where to look for the marks.

So, when a card was selected and placed face down, nobody else (not even the person who selected it) knew what card it was, but I knew at once just by looking at the two dots on its back. When I rang up Roy the Mystic, nobody but myself knew that I knew what the selected card was. I knew it was Queen of Hearts, and conveyed this information to the magician over the phone by the two hellos method I have already explained (see *Children’s World*, June 1978). After that I never touched the phone, and it was the others who did all the talking with the magician on the phone. Only after the magician had said what the card was, it was turned over for all of us to see

for the first time. And I, too, pretended that I came to know what card it was only then.

The marking of the cards did not take much time. It was done with just four dots on the back of each card, i.e., two dots near each of the two narrower edges of each card. (This duplicating is necessary because one does not know which end of the card will be the uppermost, besides back-reading from the upper end is more convenient.)

Later, when I told the old magician that this trick had further strengthened my brother-in-law’s faith in his supernatural powers, he felt both amused and distressed. “You must go and tell your brother-in-law the simple secrets of these tricks, so that he may be convinced that I have really no supernatural powers,” he said modestly.

In a reminiscent mood, Roy the Mystic once told me that as far back as the early twenties, when he was already popular as a magician, two chance happenings, over which he had no control, made many of his fans believe that he was also a wonderful hypnotist.

In both these happenings, the trick concerned was “The Girl in Mid-air”. This is also called “The Aerial Suspension”, and it was this trick, performed by the distinguished magician, Emin Suhrawardy, that had inspired Roy the Mystic into choosing Magic as his profession. In this trick the magician pretended to hypnotize his girl assistant and make her float in the air horizontally, with only her elbow resting on one end of a vertical rod. The pretence behind the fake hypnotism was that the hypnotic passes made the girl’s body lighter than air, so that it could easily float in the air instead of being pulled down by gravitation.

On one occasion, Roy was feeling indisposed, with high fever, on the eve of a show. He thought of excusing himself off from the show, but all the tickets had been sold out and it would have been too unpleasant to refund the ticket money. The

enthusiasm and excitement among the audience finally prompted the magician to go on the stage. It was announced before the curtain rose that Roy the Mystic was unwell and that he craved the indulgence of his patrons if he failed to put the kind of show they expected of him.

The excitement in the auditorium, however, made Roy almost forget his indisposition, and the show progressed beautifully. At last came the final item in the programme, "The Girl in Mid-air". Preliminary to making the girl float in the air, he administered hypnotic passes majestically over her, playing the role of a genuine hypnotist very realistically, and then raised her figure up horizontally and left her floating in mid-air. He was then looking at the audience, as was his usual practice, and was suddenly startled by a thud behind him. There was a stir among the audience also. Something strange must have happened, thought the magician, and instinctively looked behind. He found, to his horror, that his assistant (who was really a handsome Nepali boy dressed up as a girl) was no longer floating in mid-air, but lay flat on the stage in a dazed condition.

Magician Roy at once understood that, because of some mechanical mishap to the apparatus that kept the 'girl' floating in the air, she had suddenly fallen down with a thud. He wondered whether the unfortunate assistant had suffered any fracture. The curtain came down at once, and on closer examination, Roy found that the boy had only a mild shock. Anxious patrons were assured that the "girl" was all right.

"I was sorely disappointed that my final and finest item had gone wrong," Roy the Mystic told me, recounting the event. "I felt certain that it would very badly affect my reputation as a magician. But the result of the mishap was just the reverse. People remarked that because of my indisposition, the 'quantity' of hypnotism I had been able to put into the "girl" might have been insufficient; it had kept her afloat in mid-air only for a little while. The hypnotic effect must have faded away, dropping her down suddenly. They seemed convinced that the accident only proved that the secret of the trick lay in hypnotism, and that I was otherwise a good hypnotist!"

*Ajit Krishna Basu*

## RIDDLES

1. What does a traffic light tell a driver?  
*Don't look here, I am changing.*
2. What is the time when an elephant sits on your fence?  
*It is time to build a new fence.*
3. Why did the nurse tiptoe to the cupboard?  
*Because she did not want to wake up the sleeping pills.*
4. What will you call a bull which dozes?  
*Bulldozer.*
5. What did the big chimney tell the little one?  
*You are too young to smoke.*
6. Which pet makes the loudest noise?  
*Trumpet.*
7. What can run but cannot walk?  
*A river.*
8. What has got 4 ears, 6 legs, 2 hands and 2 heads?  
*A rider on a horse.*
9. Why may a beggar wear a very short coat?  
*Because it is long enough before he gets another.*
10. When is a pen-knife rather noisy?  
*When it just will not shut up.*
11. What does mummy look for, hoping she won't find?  
*A hole in your stocking.*
12. What paper is likely to give you a cold?  
*Tissue paper.*
13. How can you tell time correctly without looking at a clock?  
*By looking at a watch.*
14. Why did Anne throw her clock out of the window?  
*Because she wanted to see time fly.*
15. What do you use tonight but make tomorrow?  
*Your bed.*
16. Why did the moron take a ladder to the party?  
*Because the drinks were on the house.*

*Devendra H. Nimkar (13)*  
*India*

*Rukshna Kapadia (12)*  
*India*



# The Revenge

*(A story based on the Mahabharata)*

**I** DO feel excited about tomorrow!" said Ambika, peeping out of the window.

"The hall looks gorgeous . . . . all decorated and so well lit up," said Ambalika. "But frankly speaking, I feel more scared than excited!"

"Scared?" said Amba, looking up from the garland she was weaving. "What is there to be scared of? All Kshatriya princesses go through the 'Swayamvara' ceremony to choose their husbands. It is a simple custom."

"It may be simple for *you*," said Ambika, giving Amba a meaningful look, "but it isn't at all simple for Ambalika and myself!"

"I know!" said Ambalika with a nervous laugh. "I just wouldn't know whom to choose! Princes—especially when they are all dressed up—look so much alike!"

"It must be so nice and comfortable to have your mind all made up," said Ambika to Amba.

"Yes," added Ambalika. "You'll make a bee-line in a particular direction, whereas poor Ambika and I will be fumbling about with our garlands, not knowing how to make up our minds!"

Amba blushed, but continued to weave her garland in silence. Her two sisters, however, went on teasing her. It was common knowledge that Amba had already given her heart to young King Shalva. Shalva, who often visited the King of

Varanasi, the father of the three sisters, also loved Amba. He was sure to be present at the Swayamvar-sabha the next day. So Amba had no doubt who she would honour with her garland!

Ambika and Ambalika were younger to Amba and had no preferences of their own. They, however, knew that most of the princes from all over the country would be at the Swayamvara, all eager to win the princesses of Varanasi. Their beauty and accomplishments were widely known and talked about. Any prince would be proud to be accepted by them. Ambika and Ambalika laughed and joked as they discussed the various princes.

"Are you thinking of garlanding the King of Karnataka, Ambika?" asked Ambalika.

"Not me!" said Ambika promptly. "He is much too fat!"

"The King of Ujjain, then?"

"He has a bald patch right above his forehead," said Ambika. "I'm not going in for a bald husband."

"What about the prince of Kaushik then?" asked Ambalika.

"He is as thin as a fishing-rod!" said Ambika, turning up her dainty nose.

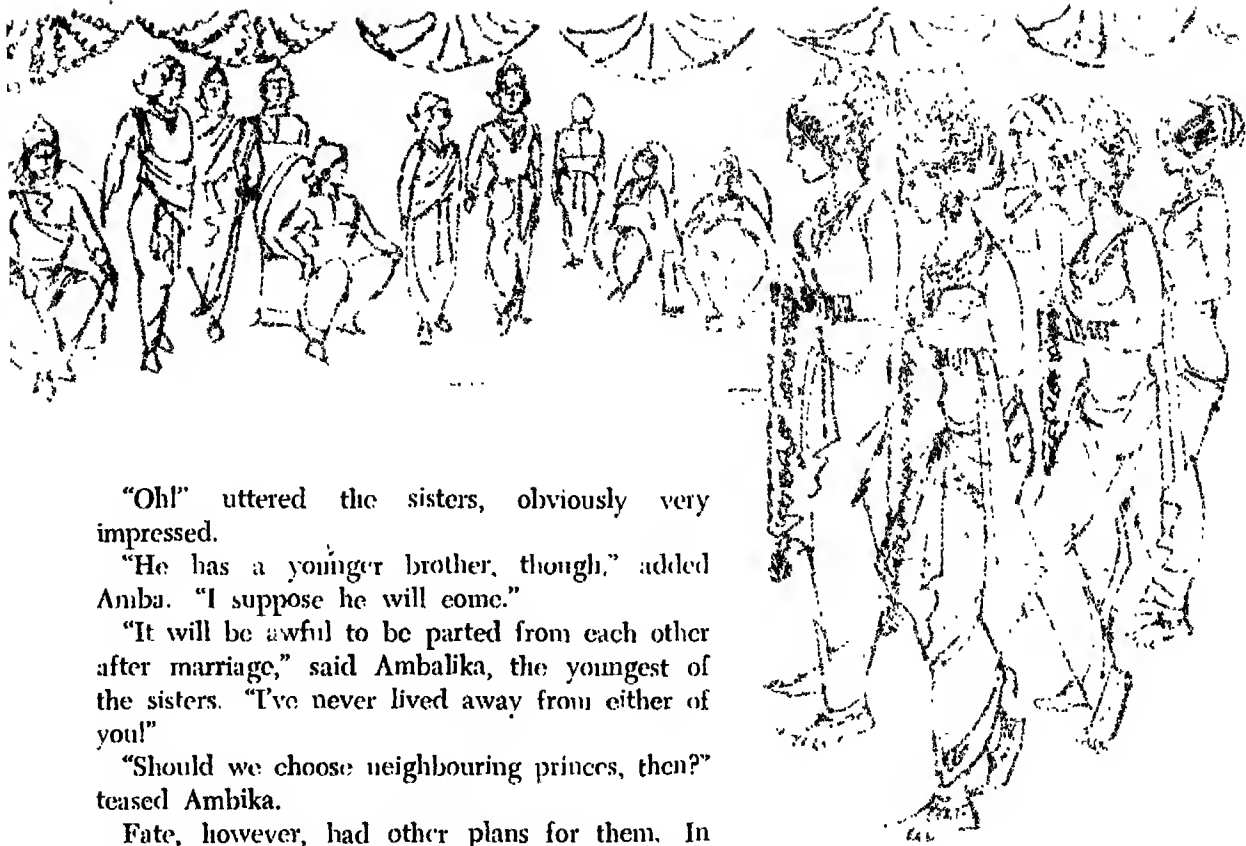
"Both of you are being very silly!" observed Amba from her corner. "Most of the princes present tomorrow will be brave, and handsome men, too!"

"The prince of Hastinapur is said to be very brave and handsome!" said Ambika.

"You mean Prince Bheeshma?" said Amba. "He is both, no doubt, but *he* won't come to the Swayamvara tomorrow."

"Why not?" asked Ambika and Ambalika together.

"He has taken a vow not to marry and has promised not to ascend his father's throne," said Amba.



"Oh!" uttered the sisters, obviously very impressed.

"He has a younger brother, though," added Amba. "I suppose he will come."

"It will be awful to be parted from each other after marriage," said Ambalika, the youngest of the sisters. "I've never lived away from either of you!"

"Should we choose neighbouring princes, then?" teased Ambika.

Fate, however, had other plans for them. In spite of the prevailing custom of Swayamvara, the sisters got no opportunity of making their own choice. But all this comes later. At the time the sisters were talking and joking amongst themselves, Prince Bheeshma was sitting in his room, looking out of the window, thoughtfully. Vichitraveerya, his young step-brother, was out in the woods, riding. Just then Satyawati came into the room.

Satyavati was Bheeshma's widowed step-mother. It was for her sake that Bheeshma had renounced his right to the throne and taken the vow of celibacy. If it had not been for this vow, Satyawati would not have married King Shantanu, Bheeshma's father. Bheeshma had thus sacrificed his inheritance and happiness to make his father happy. Since that memorable day, Bheeshma had devoted himself to looking after his parents and later his half-brothers, too. When Shantanu died, Bheeshma took charge, bringing up the young princes as tenderly and carefully as his father would have done. He reigned over the kingdom, on their behalf, taking great care to see that everything went smooth and easy for them when they became old enough to take over from him.

Bheeshma stood up on seeing Satyawati. "Bheeshma," she said without any preamble, "have you heard of the Swayamvara of the princesses of Varanasi? I was just thinking. Vichitra-

veerya is old enough to get married now."

"Yes, mother, I've planned it all," said Bheeshma. "Please leave it to me."

"Very well," said Satyawati, "I merely wanted to remind you."

The day of the Swayamvara arrived. The royal courtyard of Varanasi was packed to capacity. There were princes and kings galore, all looking their best. The spectators formed a solid wall on all sides, talking excitedly amongst themselves. Suddenly there was a hush. "Here they come!" whispered the people eagerly. "Here they are!"

The three princesses — Amba, Ambika, and Ambalika — were, indeed, visions of beauty, as they stepped into the courtyard. Three maids-in-waiting followed them, carrying three garlands. Several hearts missed a beat, as the three sisters walked into the sabha. Whom would they choose? King Shalva had a confident smile on his lips. He had no doubts about his own fate. His eyes lit up as they met Amba's, in triumphant acknowledgement.

But before Amba could even pick up the garland, she found her hand held in a firm clasp. She could not even cry out as she was forcibly dragged into a chariot along with her two sisters. "I am Bheeshma," said their captor in a loud, yet

sweet, resonant voice. "I am taking away the three princesses so that they may wed my brother, King Vichitraveerya. Stop me if you can!" And his chariot sped away like the wind.

Carrying away a princess by force was then an accepted form of marriage among the Kshatriyas. The King of Varanasi, therefore, merely smiled and said, "I'm sure my daughters will be happy and they will be together too!" He did not know about Amba and King Shalva's love for each other.

Shalva, however, took it as a great insult. So did the other princes. What right had Bheeshma to sneak into the sabha and take away the princesses by force? And who was that Vichitraveerya — a mere kid compared to them? They all picked up their weapons immediately and went after Bheeshma. But he was more than a match for all of them taken together. His arrows showered like rain, and the kings and princes scattered around like the leaves before a storm.

Ambika and Ambalika looked on interestedly. Here was bravery indeed! But Amba's eyes flashed with wrath. Tears streamed down her cheeks as she saw Shalva fall from his horse in a crumpled heap. 'Brute,' she muttered to herself. 'Oh! you heartless brute!'

The three princesses were welcomed very well in Hastinapur. Satyawati herself came out to receive them and told them how happy she was to have them as her daughters-in-law. Ambika and Ambalika took to her at once. Only Amba looked away and refused to thaw.

"You will be very happy here," said Bheeshma in a gentle voice. "Sorry, I had to bring you by force."

"I shall never be happy here!" Amba said, looking him straight in the eyes. "And I can never marry your brother."

"Why?" asked Bheeshma, calmly.

"I have already accepted another man as my husband in my heart of hearts," said Amba, "and I would have garlanded him today!"

"I am sorry I did not know this," said Bheeshma. "Tell me who he is, and I shall take you back to him."

"It is King Shalva," said Amba, looking away, "whom I have always loved."

But when Bheeshma left Amba at Shalva's palace, the latter refused to have anything to do with her. "I cannot marry a girl who has been forcibly carried away by another," he said, refusing to look into Amba's tearful eyes, "I have my own prestige to think of!"

"But they have been very honourable in their conduct!" cried Amba. "Bheeshma brought me here the moment I told him that I consider you to be my husband."

"Forget all that," said Shalva. "I tell you I cannot marry you now."

"But what shall I do? Where shall I go?" cried Amba distraught with grief. "I cannot go back to Varanasi, to be pitied by all."

"Better go back to Bheeshma!" said Shalva heartlessly.

"How I hate Bheeshma!" cried Amba. "It is he who has messed up my life! If he hadn't carried me away forcibly, all this would not have happened to me!"

Amba stood up, her eyes flashing. "Bheeshma shall be punished for what he has done to me! I'll have my revenge! I will! I will!" she cried.

*Swapna Dutta*

*(To be concluded)*

## WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

There the apparition slept,

While the notes rolled like an overflowing  
stream.

In my mellow dream,

What a thousand pages could not tell,

I have come to learn today,

What lips and lives cannot say.

What is about and above the clouds!

What is heaven like, if there is one.

Maybe, they keep the secret from me;

Because, I will lose my zeal after I see!

But, I have a little Paradise of my own,

In the valley of sunset.

And, I whisper to the leaves in the glade;

To the dew in the purple shade;

And the Heaven

To which my mind's eye gave birth

Is nothing

But the brighter side of Earth!

*Padmaja Nair*

# Museum With A Difference

**T**HOSE of you who were in Delhi this vacation might have heard about some museum of natural history and its inauguration on World Environment Day observed on June 5. But if you're anything like what I was not so long ago, I bet you vaguely browsed through the newspaper write-ups or just gave half-an-ear to the radio news report, associating 'museum' with that dreadfully dreary old place you had yawned your way through, and 'natural history' with that dreadfully dull second chapter in your third standard textbook on 'How the World Began'.

But wait a moment! This is a museum, but it's anything but dreary or dull! Located at the junction of Barakhamba Road and Tansen Marg in New Delhi, the National Museum of Natural History (or NMNH, if you like abbreviations) is novel in more than one way. First, it is the only museum of its kind in India. There are quite a few museums which have sections on natural history, but NMNH is the first one which deals entirely with natural history, evolution, and ecology (if you're not very sure about what the last two mean, don't bother to reach for the dictionary: you'll find out pretty soon). And then there is the museum itself: there are 'telephones' you can listen to, real eggs you can watch hatching inside an incubator, a real aquarium, as well as a fake one, a fossil you can touch and feel, a tiny movie-screen, innumerable picture windows, and no—thank God—'Please Do Not Touch' signs...for example. There's so much more, besides, and I hope that by the end of this article, you will be rid of any illusion you may have of dreary museums, and will decide to pay NMNH a visit after all...believe me, you won't regret it!

Before I begin telling you what the museum has on display, let's know a little of what it is really meant for:

Most of us have heard about projects to save animals which are faced with extinction—Project Tiger, for example. But what

is really important, according to Mr. Nair, who is the Director of NMNH, is making the public (namely, us) aware of things like the balance of nature, of ecology, or the relation between every living creature or plant and its environment. Why should we bother about a tiger, anyway? So what, if it becomes extinct? Dinosaurs did, and so might we, in the (thank goodness) not-so-near future. But, what most of us don't realize is the tremendous importance every living thing, however obscure or insignificant, has in the complete, perfect world of nature. Just as there is a sunrise for every sunset, there is a killer for a killer, an oppressor for an oppressor, a protector for a protector. If you've heard that song about the little old lady who swallowed a fly, you will know what I mean! (She swallowed

'Great Grandfather' fossil



a spider to catch the fly, a rat to catch the spider, a cat to catch the rat, a dog to catch the cat, and so on—nobody knows why she swallowed the fly at all, but that's a different story). The first aim of NMNH is to make us aware of this.

The second aim of NMNH is to provide you and your class and schoolmates with what Mr. Nair called an 'experience'. After all, you do learn about mammals and reptiles and fossils and the origin of the solar system at school. But you often forget, and in the fever of examination, you often 'do' only selected chapters and questions. The amount you actually grasp and retain is frankly very little. NMNH tries to tell you what you learn at school, but in a very different way. Fossils, for example . . .

I'm sure you can rattle off the definition of a fossil, how it is formed, where it is found, the information it gives us, etcetera. And in another year or two, I'm sure you would have forgotten everything. NMNH tries to give you an 'experience' with fossils . . . there is a 'rock wall' with 'fossils' engraved on it, plus a real fossil which you can feel . . . and all these help you remember a lot more about fossils than you ever would by just reading a book.

Besides all this, NMNH will soon be

"Telephones you can listen to"



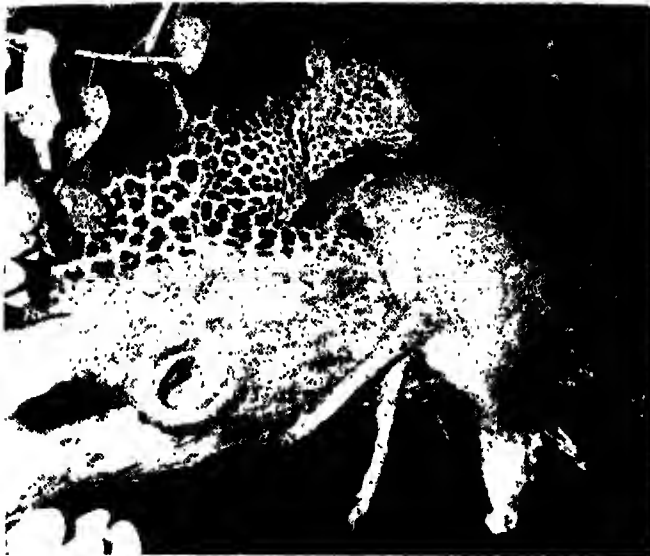
opening a Discovery Room, a place where you can "move freely," to quote Mr. Nair. There will be models which you can handle, audio-visual facilities, a lab where you can experiment to your heart's content with test tubes, chemicals, leaves—"the works," as someone enthusiastically put it. The Discovery Room includes (or, rather, will include) a library with books on science (natural science, mainly) and a **Hobby Club** which will provide you with the first stepping stones to collections of feathers, leaves, stones, or other such items, if you are interested. And there will be something to interest your Science teacher, too—an **Exhibit Bank**, which will have portable kits, each kit equipped with reading material, photographs, etcetera, on a particular topic—say, Fossils, or the Solar System. Schools will be able to borrow these kits for a specific period, and they will have to book their "tickets" in advance, just like you and I have to do if we want to see a good movie. The Discovery Room will hopefully be ready in about a year.

Now the Museum itself. First, I'll tell you what it contains (broadly), and then describe a few of the most interesting exhibits.

At the bottom of the stairs, well, you have a life-size, incredibly ugly, but very friendly-looking, wooden, one-horned rhino. My companion nauseatingly called him 'Swcetic Pic' and I hope you will remember this when you go and see the museum, because a laugh is a good way to begin looking at anything!

At the top of the stairway you have a sort of reception platform to the Museum. The Museum is actually circular, and you begin and end at the reception platform. On your left is a large picture window with a picture of the universe which gave me a terrible pang of agrophobia . . . when you see the speck that represents the location of our solar system, you'll know why. On the right, opposite the picture-window of the universe, is another large picture-window which gives you the various stages in the development of the earth and of life on it. Now, this was an extremely interesting picture-window. By itself, I might have just glanced at it, because it looks long and complex, and the names given to the stages





"Very realistically stuffed animals...leopard on a tree with its prey, a deer"

of development are even longer and more complex. But attached to this picture-window are a number of brightly coloured receivers, which are connected to a tape-recorded commentary on the solar system. The commentary, which is in Hindi, is very lucid and really makes you feel like listening. And as you listen, you watch the window, and all together, you learn a lot without even trying!

The first section of the Museum deals with the Beginnings...how the universe began, how our solar system was formed, how the earth cooled and formed land and water, how the first sign of life came to be on earth (and along with it, an excellent cross-sectional model of a cell). As you proceed from picture to picture, you have a narration going on (I only wished there could have been some arrangement for us to stop it at a particular point and then go on to the next item) and background music, too, to watch the pictures by.

The next section deals with fossils and the clues they give to evolution, or the development of new organisms from pre-existing forms when they have to adapt themselves to changed surroundings. One side of this section is a large rock-wall, and it is this rock-wall that has fossils engraved on it...but you have to look for them! In the middle is a large fossil from Tamilnadu, which we are told is 100 million

years old! (My companion named this exhibit 'Great Grandfather'.) It looks like the back of a snail and belongs (or belonged) to Phylum Mollusca. Over Great Grandfather is a circular, satellite-like exhibit which tells you how a fossil is formed. Opposite the rock-wall is the story of Evolution, the story which the fossils tell...this section tells you why evolution happens and the proofs we have that it has happened (such as anatomical similarities between different animals, geographical distribution, etcetera).

After evolution, you have the cause for it...ecology. All living things must live in harmony with their surroundings, and since their surroundings will not change to suit them, they must change to suit their surroundings. The relationship between the living thing and its environment is called ecology, and the change, or adaptation, brings about evolution. (You must have heard that man came from the monkeys...if you're anything like me, you must have disbelieved it, only to find that, though sad, it is true...) Anyhow, this exhibit contains a number of picture-windows with details of ecology in different types of surroundings...in a pond, on a mountain, and so on. You will be able to understand the word 'ecology' properly when you see this section, and here is a day-to-day parallel which I hope you will remember: we often come across a group of people whom we don't seem to like. But we know that we can't expect them to change, and so, we do, even if

"Real eggs you can watch hatching inside an incubator"

(Photographs by our Staff Photographer)



not entirely, or else we're going to be the losers. This kind of adaptation is ecology, and the 'change' we undergo is a sort of evolution.

Now we come to a number of sections on the life around us. Each section contains picture-windows, stuffed models, preserved specimens, details of the life-styles and other features of a particular group of nature: plants, birds, invertebrates, reptiles, fish, or mammals. All the photographs are in colour, and each section has something special to offer: the section on plants has an excellent window on pollination (I nostalgically remembered my Botany and A.C. Dutta); the section on invertebrates, its magnificent collection of butterflies and similar insects, or perhaps its Poterion Nep-tuni from Singapore, the section on sea-life, its movie-picture and real aquarium; the section on reptiles, its scary preserved snakes and terribly life-like overhanging snake on a tree-branch, the section on birds, its innumerable, beautiful stuffed models, or its carefully laid eggs, or its description

of the wonder of flight, or its fuzzy chicks peeping curiously at you from inside an incubator; the section on mammals has its very realistic stuffed animals, and a magnificent motion picture of wild life—lions, deer, the savannah region, and much more.

The last section seems to sum it all up... why picture-windows on ecology, why stuffed models of birds and mammals. As you enter the section, there are a large number of coloured photographs which explain why a thousand species of animals are threatened with extinction today, at the hands of man. On your right there is a leopard on a tree with its prey, a deer. And as you move further, a large window with stuffed models of some of the animals that may be tomorrow's fossils... the langur, the cheetah, the Asiatic wild ass, and more. And just as you turn round to leave, a mirror, and "the only animal that can protect the natural environment, who will decide what will survive tomorrow"... YOU.

*Minnie P. Swami*

*(More photographs on facing page)*

## The Long and Short of It

**W**HEN people—especially rich people—die, we hear or read about the wills they leave, by which their near and dear ones inherit the wealth they have acquired during their lifetime. These wills are made without the prior knowledge of the inheritors, so much so, the contents oftentimes take the beneficiaries by surprise.

We don't know whether the 'last will and testament' (as wills are formally called) of Mrs. Frederica Cook had any such surprises, but it had one great surprise for everybody: her will ran into four 'tomes' and 95,940 words. This American lady passed away in the early years of the present century.

Almost about that time died an Englishman called Thorn. His will had only three words: "All for Mother". How sweet of him! Comparable to this is the will left by Herr Karl Tausch of Germany. His will contained only two words, originally in Czech. They meant, "All to wife". This was

*(Next month: The Tallest and the Shortest)*

written a little over 11 years ago.

The British Parliament is known as the mother of parliaments. Nearly 670 years ago, King Edward I summoned the parliament on May 30, 1306. It was prorogued the same day! Whereas, the parliament summoned by George V on November 26, 1935, lasted a little over 9½ years, during which it witnessed the passing away of that monarch, the abdication of another (Edward VIII), and the coronation of a third (George VI). It ended on June 15, 1945. The credit for the single longest sitting goes to the parliament of 1889. It lasted 41 hours 30 minutes (January 31 to February 2).

Winston Churchill, one-time Prime Minister of England, entered parliament in 1900, when he was just 26. He was a sitting member for nearly 65 years. But the longest period for any parliamentarian anywhere in the world was for Josef Madarasz of Hungary (1832-1915)—83 years.



ger diorama



"Life-like overhanging snake on a tree branch"



Stuffed models of some of the animals that may be tomorrow's fossils"

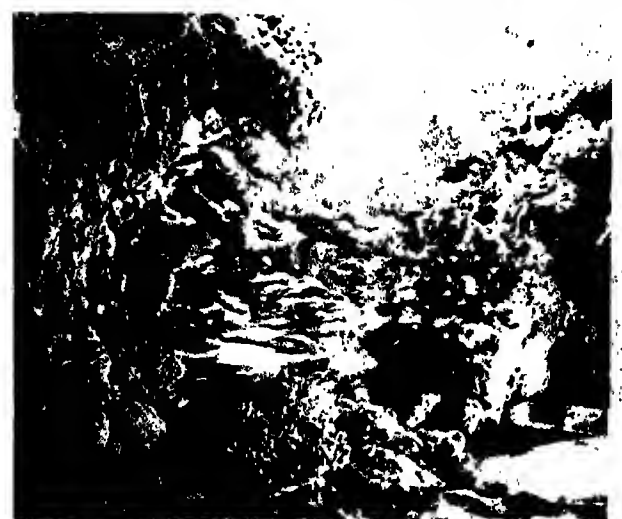


A picture-window on birds

Very friendly-looking, one-horned rhino"



Undersea diorama



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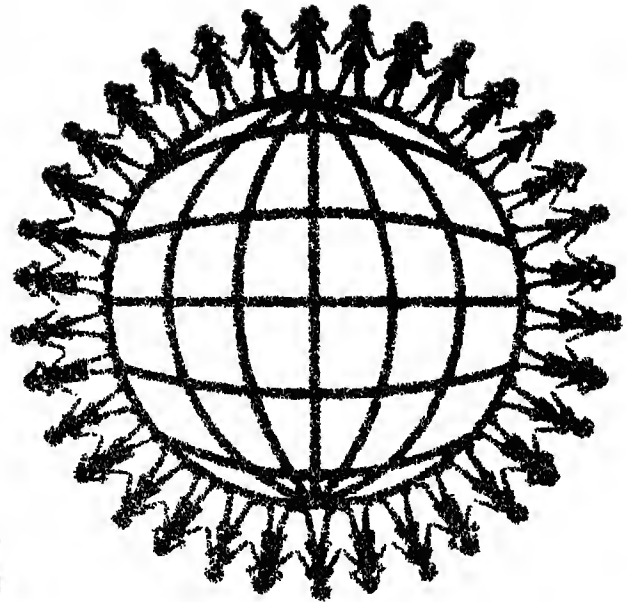
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# "In Fairness of Justice"

**W**AZIR was a poor man. He had no one in this wide world whom he could call his own. His needs were few and he lived all by himself in a small hut near the king's palace. He earned his living by begging and was quite contented with his life.

One day, he was caught stealing an old

broken stool and was arrested. He was thrown into prison, and since there was no one who cared for him; no attempt was made to conduct a trial. He remained behind bars for many months without any hope of escape. He was very upset at the injustice meted out to him.

Finally, Wazir demanded that he be taken to the king. "Why do you want to see the king?" asked the sentry.

"I want to present him with a rare treasure," replied Wazir. And he was taken to the king.

"What brings you to me?" asked the king.

"I want to present to you a rare treasure," said Wazir and took out a small packet of paper from his pocket.

The king unwrapped the packet and said, "But this is only an apple seed! What is so rare about this?"

"Your Majesty, it's no ordinary seed," explained Wazir. "If you plant it, it'll grow into a big apple tree and bear golden apples."

"In that case, why didn't you plant the seed yourself?" the king asked him.

"There is a reason why I did not plant it," replied Wazir. "It has to be planted by a person who has never stolen or cheated anyone in his life. That's all. And I thought Your Majesty would be the most ideal person to plant the seed. For, I'm sure, you've never stolen or cheated in your life."

"Oh, no, I'll not plant it!" the king said guardedly, for just then he remembered the day when he was a small boy and the queen mother had caught him stealing some of her gold coins.

"Then why don't you ask your chancellor?" said Wazir.

"Oh, no, that's not possible," said the Chancellor, because nothing was passed by him before taking a bribe.

"Then, maybe the commander of your forces?" asked Wazir.



"Certainly not," the Commander replied gruffly, for he had a share in his soldiers' pay packets.

"Maybe the supreme judge will be the ideal man to plant the seed," Wazir goaded on.

But the Judge would not hear of it, since he dispensed justice according to the payment received.

"The warden of the prison could plant it," said Wazir. But even he refused, because he used to take money from the prisoners to reduce the severity of their

punishment.

Thus no one was willing to plant the seed, because each had a guilty conscience.

At last Wazir said with humility, "Your Majesty, all of you steal, cheat, or tell a lie, still you are able to enjoy life. Poor me, I've to go to prison because I stole an old broken stool. Do you call it justice?"

The king ordered his release immediately. Wazir from then on lived happily, enjoying the fruits of honesty and justice.

*(A Folk Tale Retold by Pinky)*

# The Revenge—Part II

*(A story based on 'The Mahabharata')*

AMBA did not want to go back to Varanasi. She could not bear the thought of everyone at home pitying her or mocking at her. It was too humiliating even to think of going back. But strangely enough, Amba did not feel bitter towards King Shalva who had refused to accept her. On the contrary, all her anger fell upon Bheeshma, who had taken her away by force from the 'Swayamvara Sabha'. It was Bheeshma who had ruined her life and made it impossible for Shalva to wed her. She must be avenged.

'I'll destroy him!' cried Amba, with the fiery spirit of a true Kshatriya maiden. 'I'll have my revenge!'

But it was not an easy thing to do! How would she manage it at all? Amba approached one sage after another, seeking their advice. They merely looked at her with amusement. "Destroy Bheeshma? How can you, child?" they told her. "In any case, he didn't do anything very dreadful. How was he to know about your love for Shalva?" They advised her to forget it all and return to Varanasi. They even suggested they would send for Shalva and persuade him to marry her.

"Never!" cried Amba, her eyes flashing. "I refuse to force myself on him or anyone else."

"Why don't you go to Parasurama?" said one of the sages. "He is Bheeshma's teacher. He might be able to tell you how you can conquer him!" The sage was only half-serious when he said this. But the idea appealed to Amba. She went to

Parasurama and narrated her story.

Parasurama believed in justice and the courage to demand it. He could not but admire Amba's determination to seek justice. His heart went out to the agitated girl. "Well, what do you want me to do?" he asked, looking at Amba sharply.

"I only wish I could fight...and defeat him!" cried Amba excitedly.

"But you can't because you are a girl!" said Parasurama. "So I shall fight Bheeshma on your behalf!"

Amba bowed and touched his feet. "I shall be ever grateful to you."

Parasurama told Bheeshma all the facts and challenged him to a fight. Bheeshma had to agree, though he hated fighting his own teacher, whom he revered so much. A fierce battle raged for days between the two. Bheeshma ultimately triumphed. After his defeat, Parasurama told Amba that he could not do anything else to help her. "Lord Siva alone may be able to help you, if he will. It is certainly beyond any human being."

"Thank you, my Lord, for all you have done," said Amba gratefully. "But I shall NOT give up in despair. I shall pray to Lord Siva...shall go on praying...till he grants me this boon!"

Amba then went into the heart of a forest and began her 'tapasya'. She prayed with an intensity and earnestness that was unheard of. Days melted into weeks, weeks into months, and months into years, but Amba went on praying. During the

torrid summer, Amba prayed, looking up at the glaring sun. She stood praying, neck-deep in icy-cold water, in the freezing months of winter. Storms raged by her. Gales blew past her. Rain and hail lashed her. But Amba did not waver. She did not stop praying for even a second. "Om Siva!" she chanted. Her lips, parched with thirst, ached, but she went on repeating "Om Siva! Om Siva!"

Her prayers reached Lord Siva and, one day, he stood before her, smiling. "I am pleased, Amba. You shall have your heart's desire."

"I want to fight Bhishma, my Lord. But I can't as a woman!"

"You shall be reborn as Shikhandi, the son of King Drupada, and you shall fight Bhishma in the battle of Kurukshetra," Lord Siva blessed her.

Years flew by. Bhishma's two half-brothers died very early in life. Bhishma brought up their sons, Dhritarashtra and Pandu. Dhritarashtra, though the elder, could not become king as he was blind. So Pandu became king, but he too died prematurely.



It was now Bhicshma's turn to bring up the grandchildren—the Kauravas and the Pandavas, sons of Dhritarashtra and Pandu respectively. They were all brave young men now. But Bhicshma seemed to have been not destined to live a life of peace.

The Kauravas, jealous of their cousins, the Pandavas, declared war on them. And Bhicshma, though his heart yearned for the fatherless Pandavas, was loyally bound to the Kauravas, as Dhritarashtra was still alive. But he knew that the Pandavas would ultimately win. Truth was on their side. And in his heart of hearts, he blessed them that they should.

Amba, now reborn as Shikhandi, was a great ally and supporter of the Pandavas. She did not, however, tell anyone her real story! She wondered if, during the battle, she would be able to get any where near Bhicshma at all. And if she did succeed, whether she would be able to stand up the fury of his arrows! Instead of destroying Bhicshma, she might herself be destroyed by him! But even that, she thought, would be something! The very ability to face him on the battlefield was worth all the trouble of being reborn as a man.

On the eve of the great battle, Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava, went to Bhicshma to seek his blessings. "We hate to fight with you, grandfather," he said wistfully. "But we don't see how we can help it, when the Kauravas have challenged us!"

"You can't, not as Kshatriyas. But don't be upset. I know you shall win."

"Win, grandfather?" cried Yudhishtira incredulously. "Win when you are on the other side? No one can ever defeat you!"

"I'll tell you how you can. I shall not fight Shikhandi. Tell Arjuna he should always have Shikhandi by his side. I shall throw away my weapons when I see her. I don't fight with women!"

"Women?" cried Yudhishtira once again. "How can Shikhandi be a woman? He is King Drupada's son!"

"Yes, in this life. But she is actually Amba, the eldest princess of Varanasi, whom I had brought by force to wed my younger brother, your grandfather."

Yudhishtira stared at Bhicshma speechless, while he continued his narrative. "Amba loved another man and told me so. But he refused her, because I had taken her to Hastinapur first. Amba felt I had ruined her life. She sought a boon from Siva, and was reborn as Shikhandi, to take her revenge on me!"

"How . . . very . . . strange!"

"Yes, but remember my words, Yudhishtira."

Arjuna listened to the story and took care that Shikhandi was always near him. Amba showered Bhicshma with arrows, but he never seemed to notice her existence or strike in return. It was hardly a war so far as the two of them were concerned! Amba felt a surge of resentment, and relief at the same time. She was not aware that Bhicshma could not be defeated unless he wished it himself!

The battle raged for several days. Bhicshma now felt the time had come for him to leave this world and rejoin his seven brothers in heaven. He had lived long, more than a life-time . . . atoning for a sin committed when, as the youngest of the Vasu brothers, he was an inmate of heaven. Had he not washed it all out with blood and tears long, long ago? Had he not renounced his right to love, power and glory with a smiling face? Had he not brought up his half-brothers, nephews, and grand-nephews with the most tender care—living for them, fighting for them, even in his old age? What more could a Kshatriya do? Oh, yes. He owed Amba some compensation for *her* sufferings. He would let her have the satisfaction of revenge!

Soon afterwards, Bhicshma threw away his weapons when Shikhandi attacked him, and allowed Arjuna to overpower him. Everyone—including the Pandavas—was heartbroken at the fall of this great warrior, whom death could overtake only at his own will. But a smile of satisfaction lurked about Bhicshma's lips as he blessed his grand-nephews for the last time. In his mind's eyes he could see a young beautiful girl . . . with flashing eyes, crying for revenge! Would she be satisfied, at long last?

**Swapna Dutta**

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# Varunkaka's

## Lemonade Pals



**I**T wasn't as though I didn't *like* my Uncle Varun. It's just that I was hostile to him.

Varunkaka, as I am supposed to call him, is my father's youngest cousin. He trained as a Veterinary Surgeon and then went abroad for further studies. God knows what 'further studies' they have for Vets abroad! On his return from America, Varunkaka accepted a post at the Veterinary Hospital in Jabalpore, where my parents, both Army doctors, were posted. Till he was allotted accommodation, Varunkaka intended staying with us.

I remember the day he arrived. I wasn't expecting a Levi-clad, long-haired 'Uncle'. But that didn't trouble me as much as his attitude.

"I hope you're going to be a doctor, Vani," he said when he finally noticed me. "Because if you are, you ought to be a Vet, and with my help I'm sure you'll be a good one."

Look, I *am* fond of animals. But the nearest I can come to doing anything for them *professionally* is to join the SPCA.

"Varunkaka," I said very firmly, "I'm going to study English literature."

First he just gaped, then turning to my mother he said, "Bhabhi, is your daughter crazy? She's going to ruin the family tradition." (You see, for generations our family profession has been medicine. I think our ancestors must have been vaidas and witch-doctors.)

I'm very good at keeping quiet, so I didn't tell him he was a creep, but I instantly declared a cold war on him. While he stayed with us, only two things made him tolerable.

He was an absolute wizard with my alsatian, Sultan. And he had said briefly, "Your 'roghan josh' is really delicious," the second time I made it during his stay. Of course, it was. I am a good cook!

Soo Uncle got his own accommodation. When we visited him the first time, we were shocked by the place. We had a fairly 'posh' flat in the Cantonment area. Varunkaka's house was miles away from the city. An unkempt garden and an untidy house swarming with dogs, mostly pye. Cats lay in sunny patches all over the garden. But the last straw was the snake that lay coiled on a cane chair in the verandah. "Before you squeal, Miss Prim and Proper, let me tell you he's my pet," Varunkaka told me sarcastically. Just for that, I went and patted the snake gently. I think it went down well with Varunkaka, for he said, "Several monkeys too come here. Actually they stay on the berry trees, far back in the garden. But they come here occasionally to visit me."

"Will you take me there and show me, Varunkaka?" I said, forgetting my hostility.

"Sure, Vani, I'll even show you the one I fixed up all new," he said.

"Is it some kind of toy or what?" I asked wickedly. Actually Varunkaka's language could be pretty bad sometimes.

"Look, kid," he said condescendingly, "I'll tell you the story." And sure enough he started.

"Early one morning, when I was having a cup of tea, Bahadur brought a guy, who he said was a 'madari'. Bahadur had caught him in the back garden trying to catch baby monkeys.

"Till then I didn't even know I had monkeys in my own garden. So I asked him to show me where they were. He took me to this tree which was practically loaded with monkeys. Then he started pleading with me.

"Saheb, let me catch just one female monkey, otherwise my show can't go on. I have a large family to support, Saheb, please Saheb."

"I told him to go and catch it somewhere else. But he kept on pleading, that he had caught his pair from this tree, and no one had objected at that time. So, I relented and told him, 'You can catch one. But you hurt one, and you deal with me!'

"When I came home for lunch that afternoon, I found Bahadur trying to coax a baby monkey to drink water. There was a blood-stained bandage on the poor thing's hind leg. The 'madari' was nowhere to be seen. Bahadur told me briefly how the little one fell from the tree when the 'madari' threw a net round it to trap it. By now I had discovered that the baby had not merely hurt itself, it had fractured its leg. It was half-dead with fright, so it was easy putting the plaster cast on. Otherwise, monkeys can be very difficult patients."

I was so engrossed in the tale, that I got very irritated when Varunkaka abruptly went inside. He returned wearing a pair of gum-boots and carrying another pair in his hands. "They're a bit big for you, but you'd better put them on," he said. "The grass there is taller than you, with all sorts of mosquitoes and snakes living in it."

"But where are we going?" I asked, puzzled.

"To meet my pet Baby and the rest of her family," he said briefly.

"But the story?" I protested. "How did you 'fix' Baby (that's what he called his pet)? How did she climb the tree with a broken leg?"

"Good god! Will you let me tell the story or are you going to keep asking questions? I'll tell you the rest while we walk to the back of the compound," said Varunkaka.

So, off we went and Varunkaka started, "Where was I? Oh, yes! The plaster on Baby's leg. You know she was such a sweet little thing, but she had grown very weak. I had, of course, decided that I was going to cure her at any rate — but not at the hospital.

"She was stubborn and I got no help from her. She refused to eat or drink anything, and that was hampering her recovery. Of course, I used to manage to force some milk down her throat,

but that was, not enough. She really needed much more to recover.

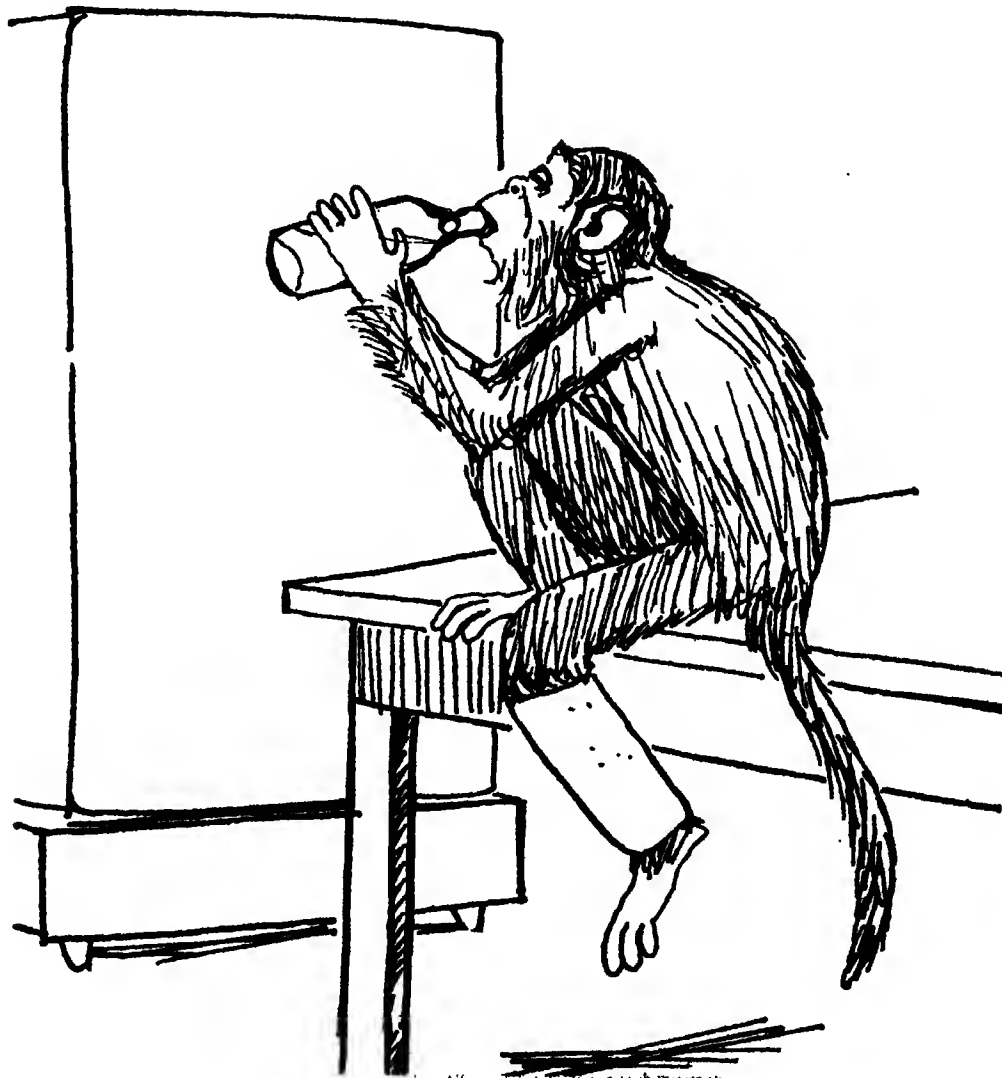
"In an attempt to tempt her to eat, I used to put her on the dining table at meal times. I was hoping she would act greedy when she saw me hogging. But it didn't work. I could see she was recovering — because she was more alert, but the progress was extremely slow. Then, one day, the funniest thing happened.

"I came back rather late for lunch. Bahadur had kept my food on the table and had gone off somewhere. I brought Baby and left her in her usual place on the table. I felt thirsty. I opened the fridge and took out a lemonade. I pressed the marble in and took a long drink. Every time I took a sip, the blue marble would bob up and down. I saw Baby staring at me. Whenever I picked up the bottle, her eyes would dart to the marble in the bottle. Sure that her interest was aroused, I held the bottle out to her. But she didn't take it. Instead, she turned her face away. I started eating. But she kept turning to see if I had picked up the bottle. So, to amuse her, I

took out another bottle of lemonade, and carefully pressed the marble in, and drank the lemonade without offering it to Baby."

I was finding it quite difficult to follow Varunkaka through the grass, in those big gum-boots. But he was oblivious to all but his story.

"Actually," he continued, "by now Baby had learned to hobble on her plaster cast. So, even if I left her on the table, she would still manage to reach the floor. I hid behind the curtain to watch her movements. She hobbled to the edge of the table and reached out to the fridge and opened it. She glanced around quickly and picked up a lemonade bottle, and moved back on the table. Then she pressed her finger on the marble till it went right in. She seemed absolutely delighted to see the marble bobbing up and down. She took a sip, and you should have seen her face! The fizz in the lemonade must have been too strong for her. How she grimaced, and how I laughed! But she went on with the rest of the lemonade, just because she wanted to see the marble





bob up and down! I let her play her game undisturbed.

"After that, I stopped coaxing her to eat. I would lead her to the fridge, and leave the door open. In the beginning, she'd go only for the lemonade. But gradually she learnt to pick up an apple or some other fruit. Then, with great ceremony she'd begin to eat. If I asked her for some, she'd gravely hand me the seeds!

"She recovered in no time and became quite a nuisance around the house. Nothing in the fridge was safe from her. Sometimes she'd just keep opening and closing the door to see the light come on. She'd tweak the dogs' ears, and they'd get mad with her. But the little monkey would shin up a door and grin at them from there. She even tried to take a shave once! That was more than enough for me. I started locking up the house and would leave her in the garden. One day, it seems, she found her family. So I let her go. Now she comes back occasionally for a lemonade!"

Varunkaka finished his story. So far the whole thing had seemed to me just a concoction of his. I didn't really believe I'd meet a monkey so fantastic.

But we soon reached a lot of berry trees, and they were literally loaded with monkeys. Monkeys of all shapes and sizes. Monkeys eating berries. Monkeys chattering, and monkeys fighting.

"Which one is Baby?" I asked Varunkaka. Before he could answer, a little monkey with a black shoelace round her neck swung on to the lowest branch.

"Is that.....?" I turned to Varunkaka and stopped short at the funny contortions of his face.

Varunkaka is crazy. Of all the ridiculous things to do, he was miming for Baby's benefit the opening of a lemonade bottle! "Glug, glug, glug...." He pretended to drink the imaginary stuff. Baby was watching him closely. With a leap she was on the ground bounding on all fours to Varunkaka. Cool as a cucumber, she swung on to his shoulder and came back to the house with us. Once inside she made straight for the fridge and helped herself to a lemonade.

So did Varunkaka and me. And as I gulped down the sweet fizzy liquid, I thought Varunkaka wasn't such a bad sort really. In fact, he was quite a pal.

*Vaijayanthi Savant*

## A SEA ADVENTURE

Mummy came to wake us that morning,  
We sprang out of bed without lazing or yawning.

For to the sea we were going that day,  
Far from the town, far far away.  
Then off we went to the sea,  
Mummy, my sister, and me!  
We sat on the sandy beach,  
Where the foam covered waves could just reach.

They tickled each toe,  
Going to and fro,  
Breaking against rocks,  
Spraying all over, their foaming froth.  
Then suddenly a giant wave appeared  
We were carried away not knowing what was to become of us

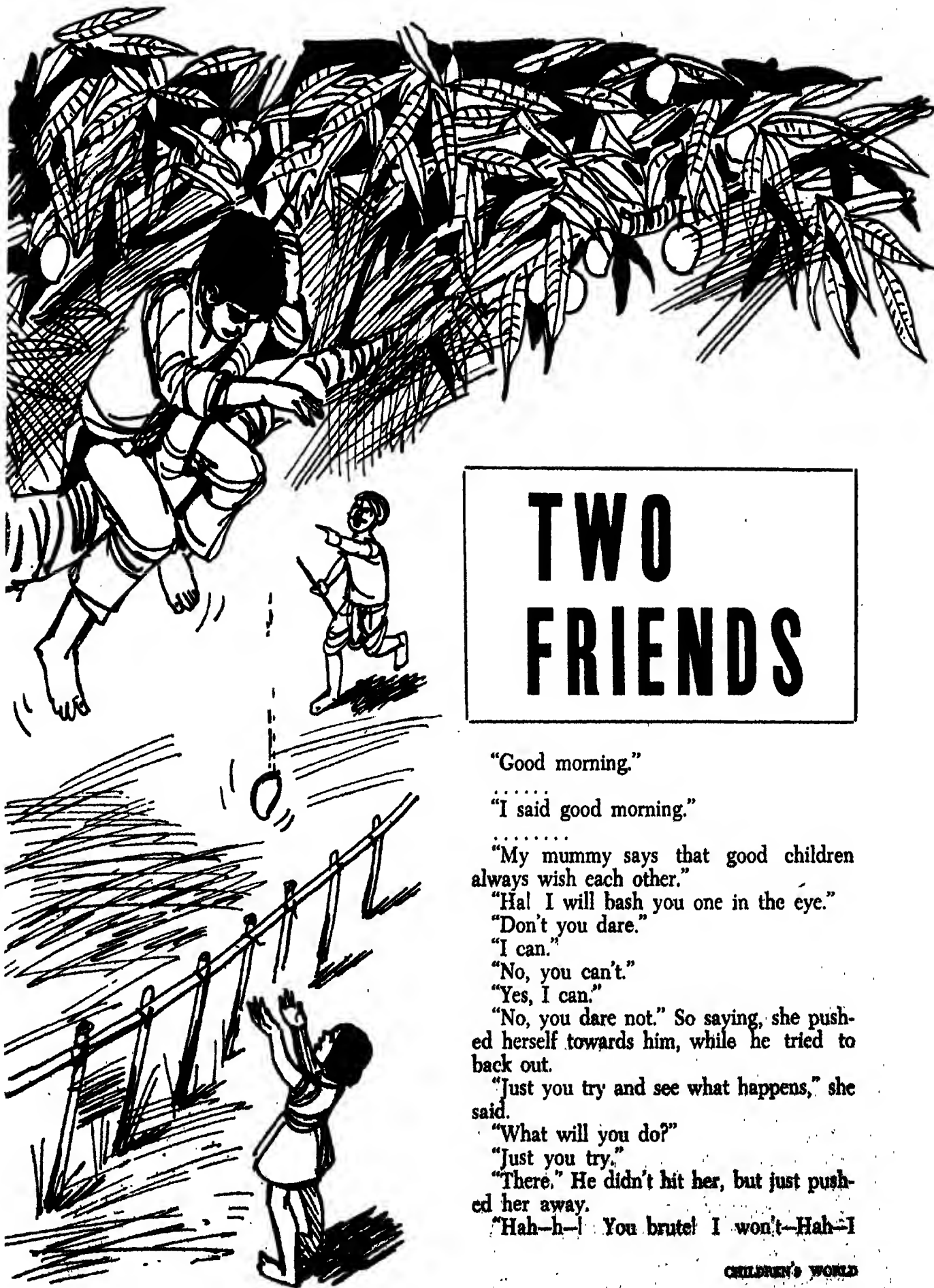
It took us into the midst of the sea,  
Threatening to drown us,  
Mummy, my sister, and me!  
Soon we saw a blackish bulk afloat,  
We mounted it, hoping it'd take  
Us near land or a boat.  
But as the bulk began to sail,

It put its head up and we saw it was a  
WHALE!

We were stranded on it, in the deep  
blue sea,

Mummy, my sister, and me!  
We sailed on its back hoping for the best,  
Until we sighted land to the west.  
Just at this encouraging moment  
We toppled over into the sea  
And the whale SWALLOWED us.  
We were in its stomach,  
With lots of other stuff,  
We bobbed up and down,  
Our journey was rough!  
Then an idea struck me,  
And sighting a feather, I took it  
And tickled the whale, one-two-three.  
It gave a sneeze,  
And out we were thrown, once again free.  
We went home after our adventure at sea,  
Mummy, my sister, and me!

*Radhika Sonia Bhalotra (11)  
India*



# TWO FRIENDS

"Good morning."

"I said good morning."

"My mummy says that good children always wish each other."

"Ha! I will bash you one in the eye."

"Don't you dare."

"I can."

"No, you can't."

"Yes, I can."

"No, you dare not." So saying, she pushed herself towards him, while he tried to back out.

"Just you try and see what happens," she said.

"What will you do?"

"Just you try."

"There." He didn't hit her, but just pushed her away.

"Hah-h-h! You brute! I won't—Hah—I

will never—never again speak to you. Never in my life. Hah—h—h—h.”

“Huh! Cry baby.”

“You—! You—! Hah—h—h.”

“Now, don’t make so much noise. You are not at all hurt.”

“Yes? Let me push you and just see whether you will cry or not. Look at my dress. It has become all dirty. Now Mummy will—hah—h—h!”

“OK! Finish off or I will really bash you.”

“You dare not. Just try again. I will go and tell my Papa and just see what he will do to you.”

“Huh! Cry baby! I am not afraid. I will also tell my Papa. He is stronger than your Papa!”

“Hah—h—h.”

“I have toffees in my pocket.”

“Sniff—sniff—hoo—h.”

“I have four toffees. I can give two to a friend, if I like.”

“Sniff—sniff.”

“OK! Take these two toffees.”

“Come on, take. They are very tasty.”

“I don’t want your toffees. I don’t want to speak to you.”

“OK, OK, so don’t speak. I will myself eat all the toffees. Oh—yum—yum.”

“Come, I will give you three toffees and I will eat only one. Now stop crying.”

“OK, OK!! OK!!! I will give you all the four toffees. Take, you greedy girl.”

“What is this? There are only papers and papers. Where are the toffees?”

“Ho, ho! Ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha ha! Ho, ho! Ha, ha.”

“Oh, you! You are a villain. I will never speak to you. Never in my life. Never—never.”

“Why do you have to get angry for such small things? Let us go and steal guavas from our neighbour’s garden. They are very tasty. You can’t get such guavas in the whole world. Come!”

“You are a cheat. I don’t want to go any-

where with you.”

“There is no question of cheating now. I will climb up the tree and throw the guavas to you. So it is you who will be holding the bank. Come on.”

“What if the gardener comes and catches us?”

“Oh! Don’t be a spoil sport. Come on.”

“Well....”

“See, there is nobody in the garden.”

“Here, catch this one and see how big this one is. Catch! Easy, isn’t it? You can eat the bigger one if you like.”

“I don’t want to eat. You stole them.”

“Look, I climbed over the fence, jumped, and again climbed up the tree risking my limbs and life. What if I had fallen down? So you see, I have earned them by the sweat of my brow—I mean by the sweat of my brow—no, no—I mean—”

“You mean by the sweat of your brow.”

“Of course, silly. Why can’t you understand such simple things? Now come on, eat!”

“Chomp, chomp.”

“Chomp—”

“Hey! You two! Come here! Are you not ashamed to steal? I am going to give you a good spanking.”

“Sir....sir....no.....no, sir, I.....we.....”

“Now, now, young man, don’t lie. Come here and be punished. And you, young lady, how could you get into such bad company?”

“Sir....sir....it is she....she asked me to steal guavas.”

“Oh....no, sir....really....truly....hah....h, I didn’t....ah....I could not....hah—h—h.”

“All right; all right, I excuse you this time. But, next time, I will punish you severely.”

“Sniff—sniff—you—oh—sniff—you are very bad—sniff—really and truly very bad—sniff. I will never, never speak to you—sniff—sniff. Never in my life. Sniff—Never—NEVER.”

Rita Pohray

# 15th AUGUST

**Day of Rejoicing—Day of Rededication to Values and Ideals**

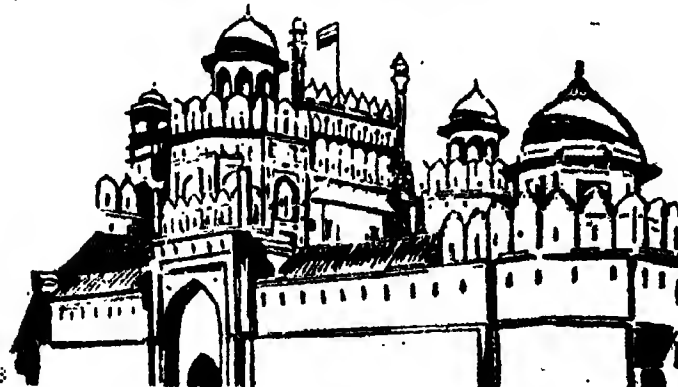
**On this Day We recall:**

- The historic struggle for freedom under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership,
- The sacrifices and sufferings of millions of our countrymen;
- The consolidation of freedom, integration of the country and laying of the foundations of economic development.

**Today We resolve:**

- To banish unemployment, sickness and illiteracy from our midst;
- To provide our people in the 5,76,000 villages with the minimum needs of drinking water, health, education and roads;
- To take the weaker sections of society along the path of socio-economic development as equal partners

**On this 31st anniversary of Freedom let us resolve to build the India of Gandhiji's dreams. Let us strive to wipe every tear from every eye.**



dayp 78/211

# THE UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEY

I JUMPED into the first coach of the train. My friends, Raman and Shyam, followed me into the compartment. I heaved a sigh of relief, on seeing them safe aboard. But it was short-lived. Just then, to my shock, I saw Mr. Khanna, a Traveling Ticket Examiner, enter the coach from the other end.

"Where the hell is he coming from?" whispered Raman.

"Only he can answer that," replied Shyam, while looking out at the fast receding platform.

"No use peeping out, Shyam! The train has picked up speed. Let's not try to jump from the running train to escape him," I said.

"He must have spotted us boarding this coach," said Shyam.

"I am sure, he must have. But he was nowhere on the platform. Where has he sprung from?" asked Raman.

"We saved our fare this morning, Raman. But, now, we may have to shell out that too, as penalty for ticketless travelling," I said.

"What bad luck today! Why is Mr. Khanna so worried about us?" commented Raman.

In the meantime, the T.T.E. had started examining the tickets of the passengers.

"Look! He is coming towards us. Let's make sad faces, and try to win his sympathy," I suggested.

It did not take long for Mr. Khanna to check the tickets and come to us.

"Show me your tickets, boys," he said.

"Sorry sir! They fell out from my pocket, while I was boarding the train," I said.

"Yes, sir, he was keeping my tickets too. See, my pockets are torn." Shyam showed him his torn pockets.

"And I had also given him my ticket. I don't have pockets," Raman put in.

"Are you sure, boys, you bought the tickets and lost them?" queried Mr. Khanna.

"Certainly, sir, we never lie," I answered for all of us.

"Except to the T.T.E., particularly when he checks your tickets," added Mr. Khanna.

"No, sir, we are telling the truth. We are all telling the truth. We have really lost our tickets," I said.

"Everytime I check, you don't show your tickets. Why?" asked Mr. Khanna with disgust.

"Because, sir, we are mere children. We lose tickets easily," I tried to smile bravely.

"Is it so? I will teach you a lesson. It will help you to keep your tickets safe," Mr. Khanna shouted angrily. "Now all three of you go to that corner and sit there."

I was accustomed to this drama. Not once or twice, but a number of times, Mr. Khanna had caught us. He would always ask us to sit in a corner. Then he would threaten to penalise us for ticketless travelling. And as Rajapur station approached, he would say, "Look, boys, it is not good to travel like this. Why don't you buy tickets? Look, next time, if I find you without tickets, I will have all of you sent to jail. I am leaving you this time. But, next time, I won't. He would then let us go. I was confident that Mr. Khanna would this time, too, permit us to slip out at the outer signal of Rajapur. But, he didn't. He kept quiet, while the train crossed the Rajapur outer signal. I felt restless and tried to get up.

"Sit down!" shouted Mr. Khanna. "Don't move from there. Give me your father's name and address."

"Please, sir," I pleaded, "pardon us this time. This is the last time. We will never again travel without tickets. I will see that we buy tickets and keep them safe."

"Please excuse us, sir," Shyam said in a choked voice.

The train had by then reached Rajapur

and we dreaded that it might start moving within a few minutes. 'Please allow us to go, sir,' I pleaded.



A cold fear gripped us. Our pleading, assurances, nothing seemed to make Mr. Khanna relent. The other passengers, who were earlier supporting him, started pleading for our release. But, Mr. Khanna didn't budge.

In the meantime, the train reached Ram Nagar. He ordered us to get down. We got down from the train, and followed Mr. Khanna out of the station. I was, by now, very apprehensive. Raman and Shyam were in dithers, too.

After a walk of a mile or two, we reached a house. He asked us to follow him.



But, Mr. Khanna was adamant. He took down our addresses and then turning to the other passengers, he said, "Please keep an eye on these boys till I return." He got out of the compartment. We saw him talking to the Station Master, who looked in our direction and nodded to whatever Mr. Khanna was telling him.

He took us to an inner room. There, in the dim light of a lantern, I could make out someone sitting on a cot. He looked quite a grown-up man, but there was something abnormal about him.

"Raj," said Mr. Khanna, addressing that man. "Get up, will you?"

It was then that I noticed that Raj had no legs. Raj tried to stand up, but was finding it difficult.

"All right, all right," said Mr. Khanna. "Relax, take it easy."

Turning towards us, he said, "Did you notice his difficulty in getting up?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Now, tell me, do you also want to lose your legs like him?" Mr. Khanna asked, while giving us a penetrating look.

"No. . . .," we all cried in one voice. The very thought of not having legs made me feel sick. My heart sank. Shyam whispered, "Does this demon want to cut our legs?" I felt shaken and tried to think of some way to escape from the house.

"Look, boys," Mr. Khanna interrupted my thoughts, "for quite some time, I wanted to bring all of you here to meet Raj, and see for yourselves the hazards of ticketless travelling."

My heart started beating faster. Could it be true what Shyam had whispered? Right then, I heard footsteps behind us. I was afraid to turn round and see who was approaching us. I wondered if Mr. Khanna was a maniac, and had kept men to cut off the legs of the persons he caught travelling without tickets.

The person who was coming from behind seemed to reach quite close to us. I looked at Shyam and Raman. They, too, were sweating in fear.

"Enough," said a woman's voice behind me. "They are already very shaken. Let me talk to them."

She came in front of us and introduced herself as Mrs. Khanna. She spoke in a soft voice. "You saw Raj, boys. When he was young, he was just like you all. He would travel without tickets and felt very happy about it. But once, when he was boarding a train. . . ."

Raj, suddenly, stopped her. He raised his head and looked straight at us. In a choked

voice, he spoke, "It was great fun to travel without tickets. The money I thus saved was spent on movies and sweets. But then one day, there was a sudden checking and I tried to jump off the moving train. I fell between my bogie and the signal post. My legs were caught between the wheels." He couldn't speak further, but pointed towards his half-legs.

I was jolted back to reality by Mrs. Khanna's soothing voice. "Now sit down, boys. Here's coffee for you all."

Mr. Khanna added, "Yes, and you will stay with us tonight. I have already had messages sent to your parents through the Station Master at Rajapur. They would not worry about your absence. Tomorrow morning, you can go back. I will buy tickets for your return journey. I wanted you to see for yourselves what might be the consequence of ticketless travelling."

That evening we realised our mistake. We developed respect and affection for Mr. Khanna. He had shown us the right path with great understanding.

*E Shiela*

*(Courtesy: Writers Workshop)*

## BIRDS

Birds fly in the sky  
to one another dizzy high  
The little sparrow in the west  
quickly as the day begins  
hops out of her nest.  
The lark soars up in the sky in gay mood  
and for his little ones searches food.  
Out of the hole in the oak tree  
to see the new day the owl peeps,  
as he can't see anything  
just goes to sleep.  
So as time passes on  
and the day goes on  
each bird sings gaily  
and goes his own way.

*Anjali Pathak (14)  
India*



FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY

# KING MIDAS

**K**ING MIDAS, the son of the goddess Ida, is a well known personage in Greek mythology, and has often figured in children's stories. He was a gay, pleasure-loving king, who had a passion for cultivating roses and collecting gold.

One day, Silenus, an old satyr and friend of the god Dionysus, strayed into Midas's rose garden in a drunken stupor. The gardeners there bound him with garlands of flowers and took him to the king. Instead of punishing him for trespassing, Midas entertained Silenus in right royal style for five days and five nights, before sending him back to Dionysus with an escort.

The god was grateful to Midas for being kind to his friend. He asked Midas what he



would like to have as a reward. The king, who was ever greedy for gold, immediately asked for a boon by which all that he touched would turn to gold. The god granted him his wish.

At first Midas was delighted with his gift. He ran hither and thither turning all his lovely flowers, his palace, and even the stones there to gold. However, he soon regretted his impetuosity. He realised that even the food and drink he touched were turning to gold! When he could no longer bear hunger and thirst, he begged the god to take back his boon. Dionysus was very amused. He asked Midas to go and wash his hands at the source of the river Pactolus. Midas, therefore, went to the river and washed his hands as directed. He became normal again.

It is because of this story that one says about a person, who has the ability and the knack to make money, that he has the 'Midas touch'.

King Midas had a very sad end. He attended the musical contest between Apollo and Marsyas. When Ymolus, the river god, awarded the prize to Apollo, he objected. To punish him for his temerity, Ymolus gave him a pair of ass's ears! Midas felt very ashamed of having the long ears of a donkey. He, however, managed to conceal them, for some time, under a cap. But, one day, his barber discovered the humiliating ears and an embarrassed Midas threatened him with death if he ever revealed the secret of his ears to anyone.

The barber, unable to keep the secret to himself and yet dreading the king's wrath, dug a hole near the river bank. After ensuring that he was all alone, the barber whispered the truth about Midas's ears into the hole. He then filled it up and went away.

Soon, reeds sprouted from the hole and they began whispering, "King Midas has ass's ears," to all those who passed by. The closely guarded secret was soon known to everybody.

When King Midas found himself a laughing stock and discovered the reason for it, he condemned the barber to death and himself drank bull's blood and perished.

Gesta Chowdhry

## JOHANN AND THE TWO TESTS

**L**ONG, long ago, in the woods of Pittsburg, there lived a woodcutter. His name was Johann. One day, he decided to see the world. He made preparations and set off through the woods. On his way, he met a fox. It had cunning, wicked, small eyes. Johann knew it wanted to eat him. So he split open a log of wood and pretended that his axe had got stuck in it. He asked the fox to put his paw in and help him take his axe out. Thus Johann could trap him.

As he continued on his way, Johann soon came to a town. He found there was great excitement among the people. The princess was to be given in marriage to the man who accomplished two tasks. One of the suitors met Johann and told him he himself had lost the first test, so he hadn't had the chance to try the next.

The first test was to pull the king's beard. When the suitor pulled at it, the king shouted "BOO!" That frightened him so much that he fell backwards. Since he fell down, he failed in the test. Johann decided to try his luck.

When he went to the palace, he was taken before the king and the princess. She was so breathtakingly beautiful that he did not mind even risking his life for her. The king told him to pull his beard. When he pulled at it, the king shouted "BOO!" But Johann did not move a bit. The king was pleased. For the second test, Johann had to stay for a day in a lion's cage.

He bought a bagful of sweets, for he knew every lion has a sweet tooth. When he got inside the cage, he offered the lion some sweets. The lion said he would not eat any as he had to eat Johann. So, he requested the lion to play a game.

In the game, the lion's tail was to be tied to one of the bars of the cage. This Johann did. The lion then asked what he had to do next. Johann told the lion that now he could eat him. The lion could not as he was tied securely.

So both of them talked and talked and ate the sweets, until the king came the next day and announced that Johann had won both the tests and the hand of his daughter.

Mytrae Reddy (13) India

## “Top Change” by Sorcar

LET me now introduce to you another of my unforgettable magician friends, P.C. Sorcar, who died in Japan seven years ago. I still remember a memorable incident.

It was 1948. My intimate friendship with him was then about four years old, although even before that we had, what can be called, a long-distance acquaintance as fellow magic-enthusiasts, mainly through our writings on our common hobby.

At that time, I was a regular contributor to a popular Calcutta weekly. Friend Sorcar, supremely conscious of the value of publicity in a magic career, requested me to persuade the editor to use his smiling face, with the magician's feathered turban on his head, as the cover illustration of an issue.

“A magician is *not yet* generally considered as respectable as, say, a poet, politician, singer, dancer, or painter,” the editor told me. “I do not like to publicize him on the front cover. Since you certify that he is a good magician, I am ready to give him a *centrespread*, if you can write a feature on him and give me some interesting photographs. In fact, that will give him more valuable publicity than his face on the cover!”

But he set a big condition: “I must first be satisfied that your friend truly *deserves* to be encouraged by such publicity,” said the editor. “Can you bring him here one day to prove his ability as a magician?”

I took Sorcar to the editor with just a pack of cards. He impressed the editor by his personal charm, before handing him the pack to examine thoroughly. The editor examined the cards with the minutest care, determined not to be outwitted by the magician. He found exactly fifty-two cards, all different, with nothing noticeably special in them. On Sorcar's request, he shuffled the pack thoroughly and returned it to the magician.

Sorcar lifted the top card of the pack with his right hand and showed it to all of us, including the editor. I must add here that the magician was surrounded by eager spectators from among the editorial staff. Everybody, particularly the editor, saw that the card was Nine of Hearts. And everybody said so.

“Are you sure, or have you any doubts?” Sorcar asked the editor. The editor had no doubts.

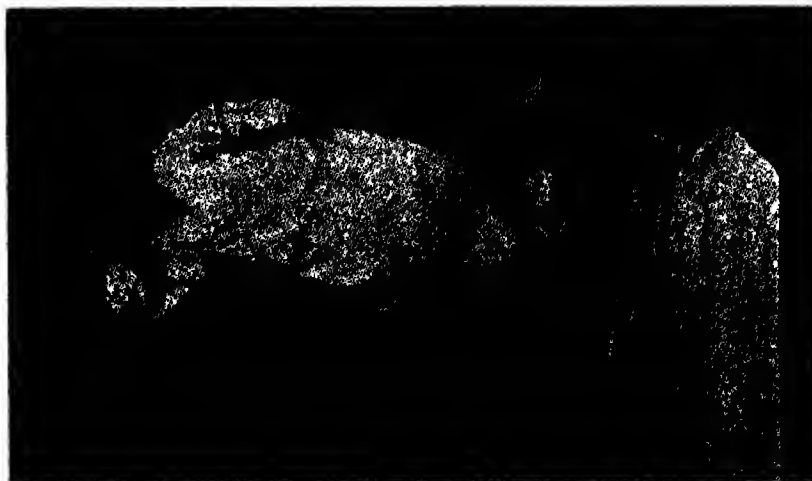
“Then I keep this card right in front of you, so that you can always keep your eyes on it.” Sorcar, as we all saw, placed the Nine of Hearts face down on the table right in front of the editor.

“Now, sir, are you still sure you saw me place the Nine of Hearts here?” Sorcar asked.

“Of course,” the editor assured him.

“Will you please pick the card up with your own hand and see?” the magician requested.

The editor picked up the card himself. It was *not* the Nine of Hearts, but an Ace of Spades!



“The Girl in Mid-air” act performed by Roy the Mystic

The editor was amazed. So were we all. Not to speak of the editor and his staff who did not dabble in magic, even I, a keen student of magic myself, found it an amazing feat. I had kept a close watch on every movement of Sorcar's hands to notice when and how he would execute the essential sleight which I knew. But my eyes failed to catch him in the act, and it looked like nothing less than a miracle.

"This is sure hypnotism!" said the editor. "You really showed us the Ace of Spades and hypnotized us in such a manner that we saw it in our hypnotic state as the Nine of Hearts."

"It has nothing to do with hypnotism," Sorcar smilingly assured him. "It is sheer sleight-of-hand."

I personally corroborated my friend's statement, on the strength of my own knowledge. Sorcar offered to satisfy the editor with some more feats, but he said it was not necessary. One stunning feat was enough to convince him that Sorcar fully deserved the publicity he had asked for.

What was the secret of that marvellous feat? A sleight is easy to describe but extremely difficult to execute cleverly. Technically known as 'Top Change' in cards magic, the highly deceptive sleight consists of exchanging the card in the right hand for the card at the top of the pack held in the left hand. As the change is made from the top of the pack, the sleight is called 'Top Change'.

For those who are curious, I shall briefly describe the particular sleight on which some of the most mystifying feats of cards magic are based. The

card into which the card shown in the right hand is to be changed rests on the top of the pack held in the left hand. The pack rests on the fingers of the left hand with the left thumb resting on the top. The left thumb slightly *pushes* the top card a little so that it is *projected* about three-fourths of an inch beyond the other cards of the pack. In its downward sweep (after showing the card), the right hand comes close to the left hand for a fraction of a second. Within that instant, the card held by the fingers of the right hand is pushed under the left thumb which retains it on the top of the pack by downward pressure and the right hand fingers take the projected card which is then placed face down on the table. The exchange is made very fast but very smoothly and at ease, *without the slightest show of anxious hurry*. Neatness of execution, aided by a swaying motion of the hands, is essential in concealing the deception.

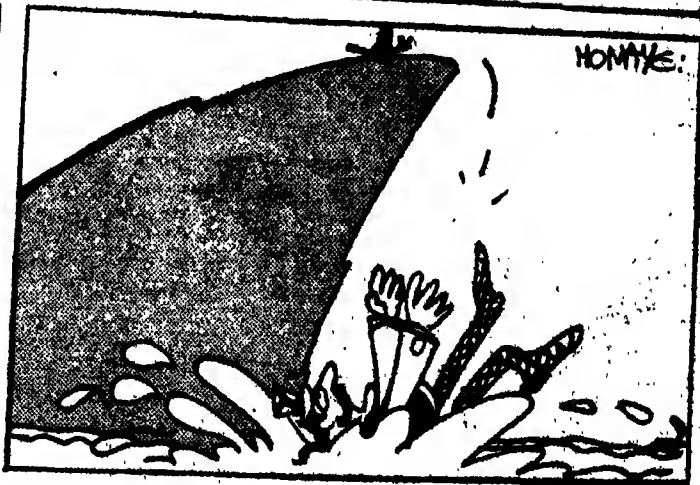
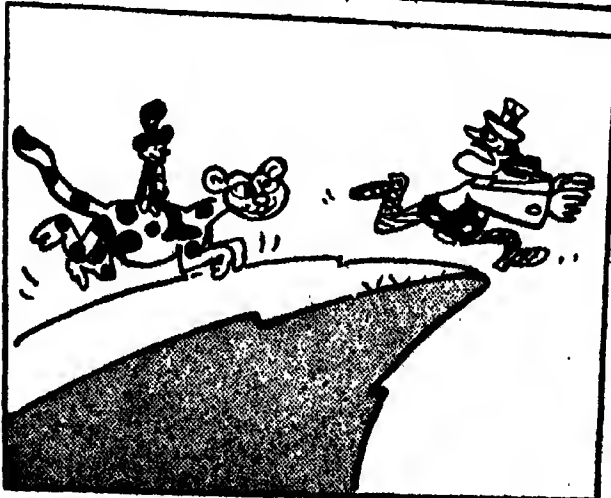
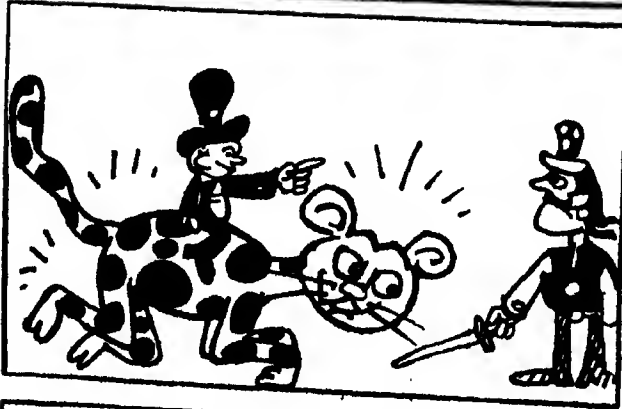
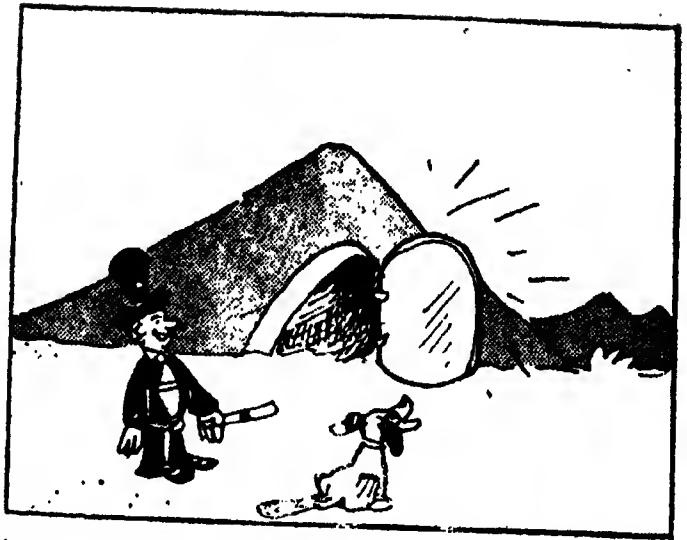
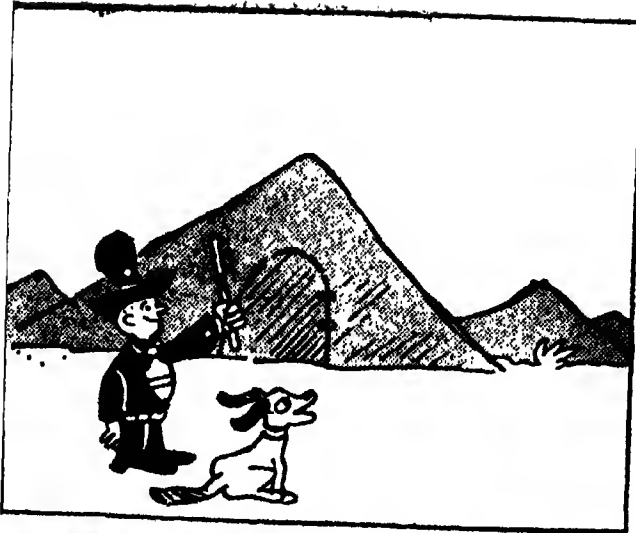
Sorcar had learnt Magic the hard way, which is the proper way to master the art. He mastered the basic sleights with the spirit of *sadhana* (as it is called in Sanskrit) which consists of, among other qualities, two D's and two P's — Devotion and Determination, Practice and Perseverance.

It was only after thoroughly mastering the basic principles and basic sleights that Sorcar went on specializing in big-stage illusions. He did not "go big" without first building a strong and solid foundation. That is what made him great. His is a "Success Story".

Ajit Krishna Basu



(Turn over)



# KAPISH



• ANANT PAI  
• MOHANDAS

A NEW FACTORY HAS COME UP ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE JUNGLE AND PANJA, THE EAGLE, IS CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN IT—



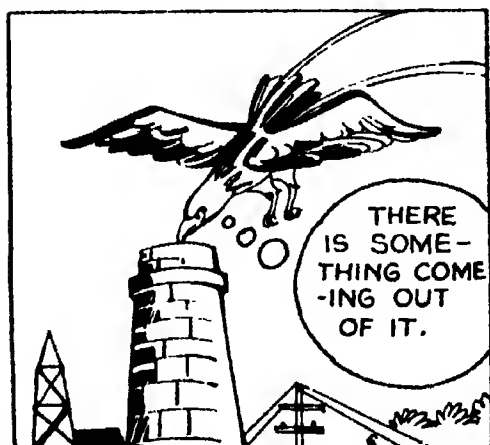
HE IS ESPECIALLY FASCINATED BY THE TALL CHIMNEY —



IF THIS THING HAD SOME BRANCHES IT WOULD BE A GOOD PLACE TO BUILD A NEST ON.



I WONDER WHAT IT IS USED FOR.



THERE IS SOMETHING COMING OUT OF IT.



SMOKE



NOT ORDINARY SMOKE... (GASP)... IT'S POISONOUS.



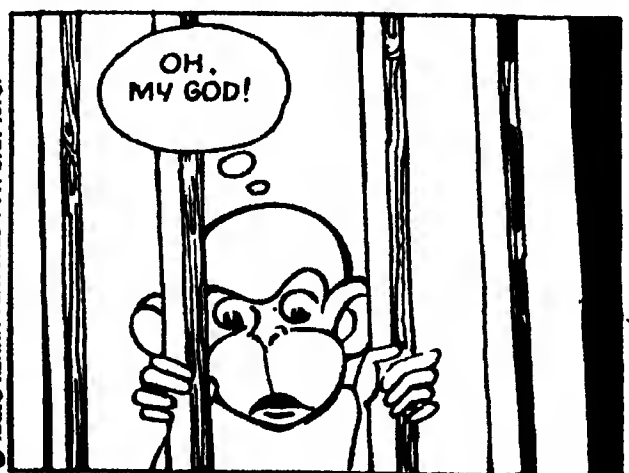
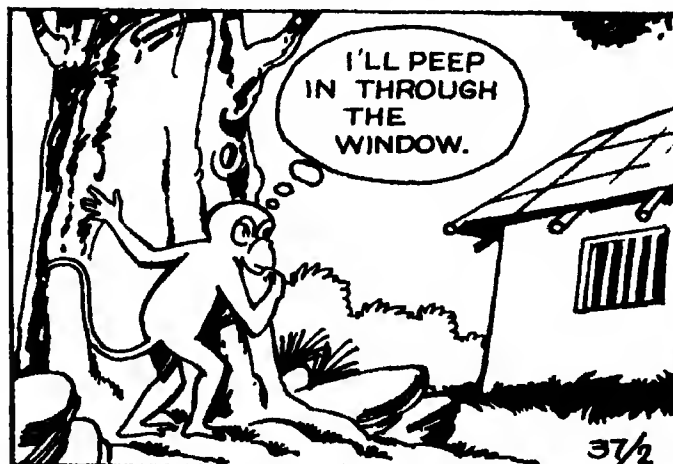
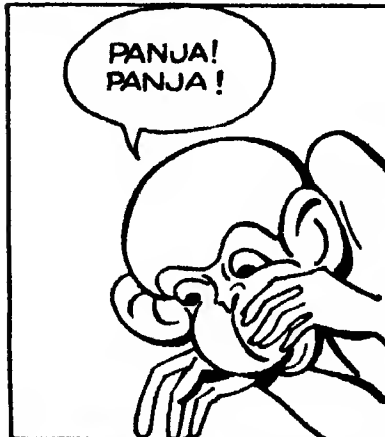
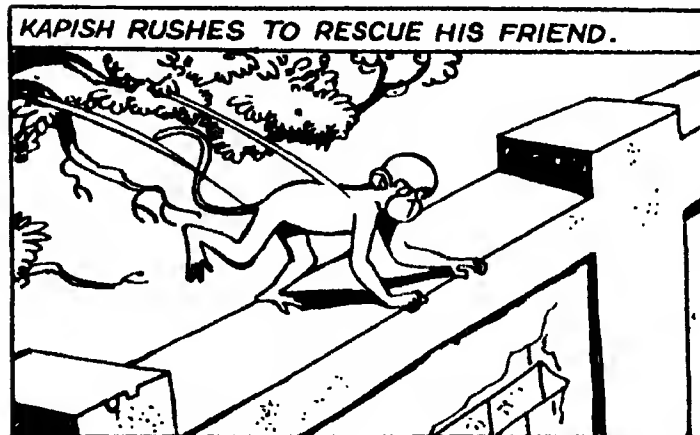
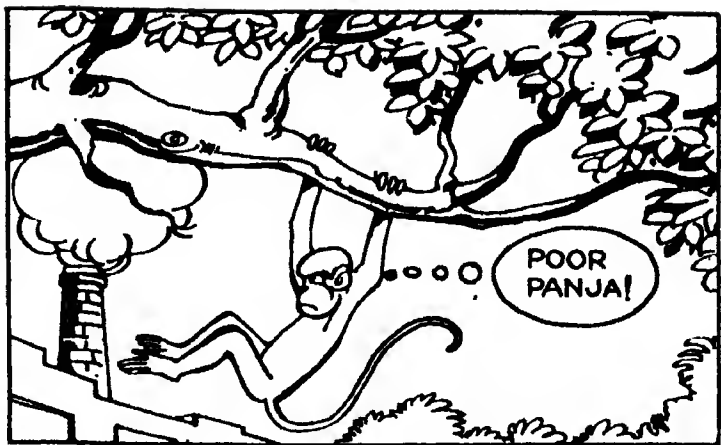
I'M FEELING DIZZY.



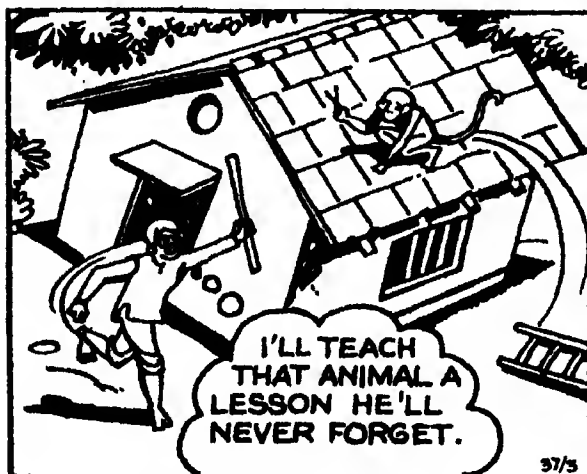
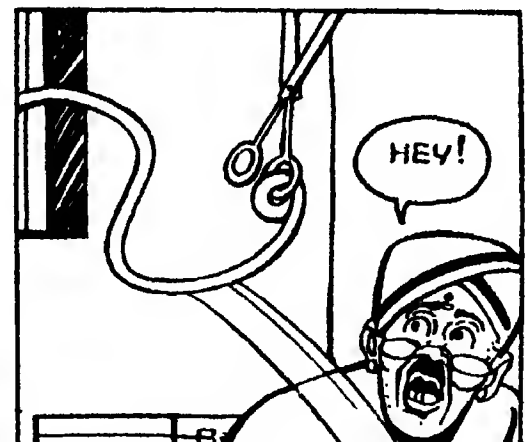
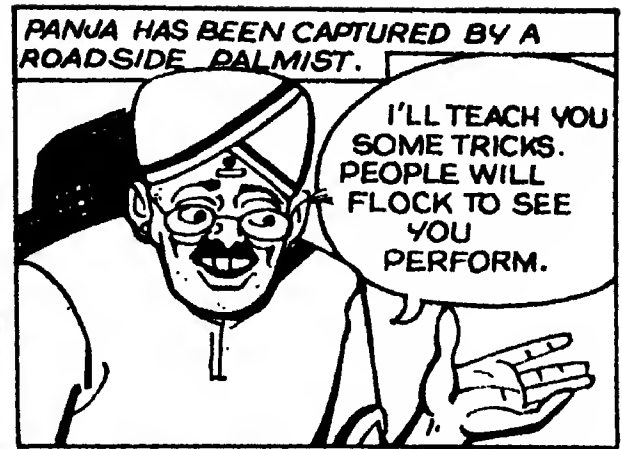
WHAT'S WRONG WITH PANJA? HE'S FALLING!

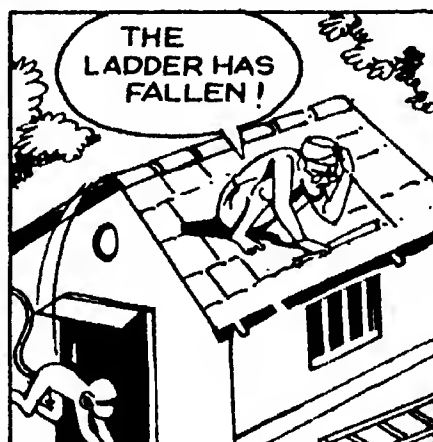
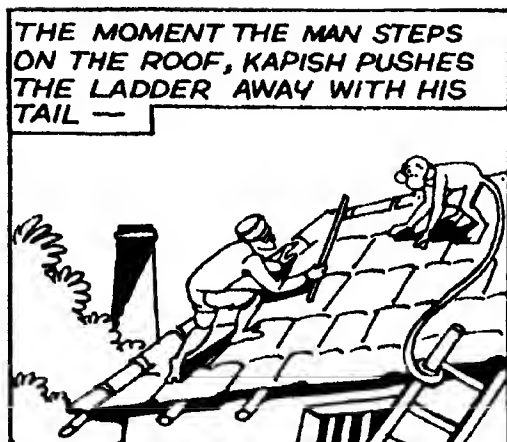
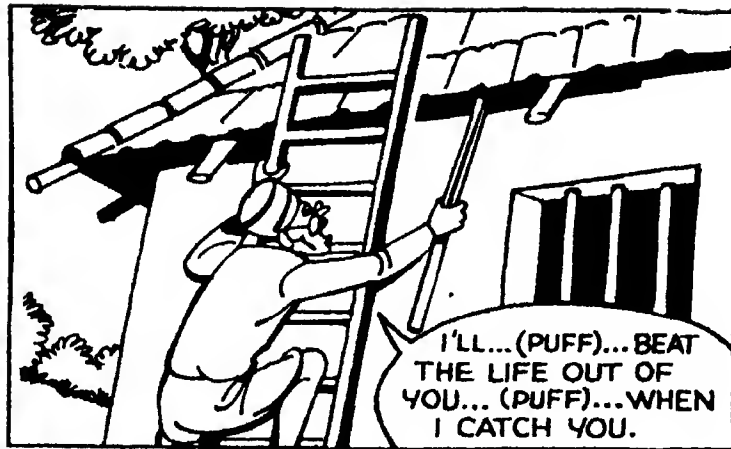
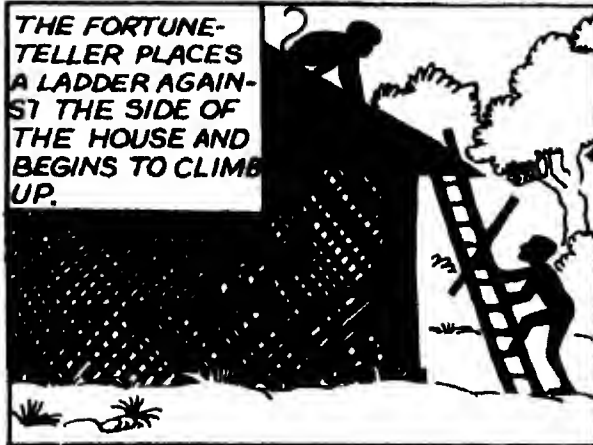
KAPISH HAS BEEN WATCHING FROM THE JUNGLE.











# The Brahmin's Goat

*Three hungry rogues, seeing a brahmin carry a goat,  
thought to themselves — a man to thrive  
must needs keep alive.*

*They also knew, where flattery fails  
intrigue is most certain to avail.*

*Disguising themselves according to a plan,  
one by one they approached the brahmin.  
The first remarked, "Oh, holy man, to carry a pig is a sin."  
"You are a fool, sir", the brahmin began to yell,  
"as, between a goat and a pig the difference you can't tell."*

*The second came and asked why he carried a dead calf,  
adding, "Touch not anything which lifeless lies,  
as such a sin not even a 'Yagna' purifies."  
The holy man let out a sarcastic laugh  
and also called him a fool for mistaking a goat for a calf.*

*The third inquired why he carried a donkey,  
saying it was unhygienic and misfortune was sure.  
Scared, and wanting to go to the Ganges to become pure,  
the gullible brahmin handed over the goat to the man,  
who with the others carried out their pre-arranged plan.*

(Adapted from 'The Panchatantra' by Shiv Dhawan)





Runners-up Jimmy Connors (above) and Chris Evert (at right)

AS LONDON braced itself up for the World's most hotly contested tennis crown, Wimbledon, the question in the minds of tennis enthusiasts the world over was whether history would repeat itself after 42 years. The tennis king, Bjorn Borg of Sweden, was to fight to equal Fred Perry's record of winning three successive Wimbledon crowns. As the Championship came to a close, Borg proved to the world that no living tennis player at the moment was anywhere near him. Fred Perry himself put it thus: "If he (Borg) had jumped out of a skyscraper today, he would have gone upwards." Borg too felt he had never played better.

Besides Borg, most of the major stars of the world, like Jimmy Connors, Guillermo Vilas, Newcombe, Raul Ramirez, Arthur Ashe, Ilie Nastase, and Roscoe Tanner, were ready to fight for the coveted tennis crown. No less enthusiastic were Virginia Wade (holder), Chris Evert, Billie Jean-King, Evonne Cawley, Martina Navratilova, and others for the women's crown.

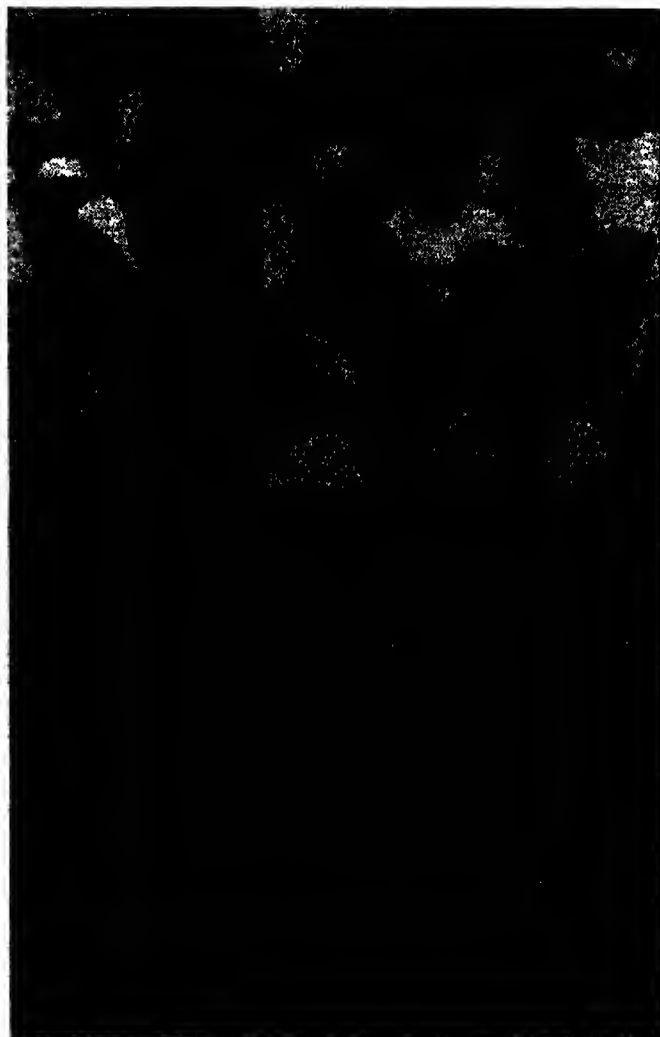
In the initial rounds of the match, there were no major casualties. When Borg, the defending champion, stormed into the quarter finals accompanied by much fancied Connors, Ramirez, Mayer, Gerulaitis, Gott-

# WIMBLEDON

fried, Okker, and Nastase, no eyebrows were raised. Also expected were the women's quarter finalists, Chris Evert, King, Navratilova, Kruger, Evonne Cawley, Virginia Ruzici, Virginia Wade, and Mima Jausovec.

While Connors (USA) beat Ramirez (Mexico) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2, Borg had a reeling Mayer (USA) lose 7-5, 6-4, 6-3. Gerulaitis (USA) had to wage a marathon battle to humble Gottfried (USA) 7-5, 4-6, 9-7, 6-2. Okker (Netherlands) also had to fight every inch to beat Nastase (Rumania) 7-5, 6-1, 2-6, 6-3.

Billie Jean-King's attempt to stage a powerful comeback was shattered by the youthful Evert 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 after a bitter fight. Navratilova, on the other hand, had



# WINNERS

no problem crushing Kruger (South Africa) 6-2, 6-4. The other semi-finalists were the Australian Evonne Cawley, who defeated Virginia Ruzici (Rumania) 7-5, 6-3, and the defending champion Wade (UK) who crushed Mima Jausovec of Yugoslavia 6-0, 6-4.

In the women's semifinals, top seed Chris Evert met Wade. Evert's crushing authority in ground strokes helped her humble the defending champion 8-6, 6-2. The other finalist was Navratilova, a Czech girl who had defected to the USA in 1975. She overcame Cawley 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Martina Navratilova had more surprises in stock. She lost the first set 2-6, in the final, but staged a spirited fight-back and won the crown defeating the 1974 and 1976 champion decisively 6-4, 7-5. She fought with such fire in her returns that the senior player was compelled to concede the match.

The men's semifinals went on the expected lines. Connors beat Gerulaitis 9-7, 6-2,



The champions Bjorn Borg (above) and Navratilova (below)



6-1 to enter the Wimbledon final for the fourth time (he won only the first one, in 1974). Borg defeated Okker 6-4, 6-4, 6-4. The entry of Borg and Connors into the finals had been predicted by keen enthusiasts even before the tournament began. They are easily the best players in the world. But the final did not live up to expectation. It was a low key match, a tame affair which, right from the word 'go', went Borg's way. He fought with such power, such superiority that during the 103-minute match only once could Connors break his service. Borg's five service aces proved that Connors was no match for him. Connors, on the other hand, double-faulted not less than four times.

When Borg won 6-2, 6-2, 6-3, he equalled the feat of Fred Perry of Britain who had won three successive Wimbledon Championships 42 years earlier. The 22-year-old Swede is well on his way for the Grand Slam winning all the four major world tournaments in

one year—a feat achieved so far only by Don Budge and Rod Laver. With the French and Wimbledon crowns already in his bag, the Grand Slam cannot be a distant dream for him.

Frew McMillan and Bob Hewitt of South Africa won the doubles for the third time defeating the US pair Peter Flemming and John McEnro 6-1, 6-4, 6-2. McMillan got another crown when, in the company of Betty Stove (Netherlands), he beat Ray Ruffles (Australia) and Billie Jean-King 6-2, 6-2 to win the mixed doubles.

The women's doubles was won by the Australian pair Kerry Reid and Wendy Turnbull defeating the East European pair, Mima Jausovec and Virginia Ruzici 4-6, 9-8, 6-3.

Tracy Austin (USA) won the junior title, triumphing over Hana Mandli Ova (Czechoslovakia) 6-0, 3-6, 6-4.

Radhakrishnan

## THE TALLEST OF THEM ALL!

Forty-six centuries ago, the then Pharaoh of Egypt built the first ever pyramid. Known as the Djoser step pyramid, located in Saqqara, it was 204ft (62 m) high — the *tallest structure in the world at that time!*

Within seventy years four more pyramids came to be built. The *tallest among them* was the Great Pyramid of Khufu at El Gizeh — 481ft (147m).

It took another 4,000 years for a building taller than that to come up. The Lincoln Cathedral, in England, was completed over a period of 100 years. Its height *was* (the building was later affected by a storm) 525ft (160m).

Three hundred years later, in 1848, construction began on the Washington Memorial, in Washington, D.C., USA. When it was completed after a little over 30 years, it was just 30ft (9m) taller than the Lincoln Cathedral.

Three years after the opening of the Washington Memorial, work began (in 1887) on the Eiffel Tower in Paris, which was completed in just 2 years 2 months and 2 days! It reached a height of 986ft (300m). When a TV antenna was added to it in 1954, the height went up

to 1052ft (320m).

For nearly half-a-century, 'Eiffel' towered over all other *structures* in the world. Then came the Chrysler Building (1046ft.) and the Empire State Building (1250ft). By sheer coincidence, these two buildings were built simultaneously, from 1929 to 1930. It had been proposed to increase the number of storeys to the Empire State Building to 113, to reach an ultimate height of 1494ft (455m).

No taller building has come up in the past 48 years, though seven TV towers in the USA and one Radio mast in Poland have surpassed the height of any structure anywhere in the world. All these were built between 1954 and 1974. While the first of these, the TV mast in Oklahoma City, reached a height of 1572ft (479m), the one in Fargo, North Dakota, is 2063ft (628m) high. The Warszawa Radio mast, located 60 km from the Polish capital, is however *the super-structure now in the world*. It 'sticks out' 2120ft (646m) into the sky — or a little less than half-a-mile. It took four years in construction.

(Next month : The Largest and the Smallest)



# CALL IT CRICKET!

**S**UMMER holidays. Jagdish and his friends were busy playing cricket. It was not any orthodox cricket that you might see Bedi or Gavaskar play. But still it was cricket. The two teams were made up of seven and nine players each. For the unequal strength, there was no possible remedy. The cricket ball belonged to nine-year-old Babu, Kartik's brother. It was a birthday present to him from somebody. Babu loaned it, on the specific condition that he be allowed to play in the team of his choice. Today, he had opted for Kartik's team.

Of the other players, the outstanding one was Prakash. He literally dominated the scene. He was big, round and chubby. He had a tendency to hit sixers and fours, because he did not like to make single runs — in fact, he did not like to run at all. He was good natured, and used to burst into laughter easily.

Satish was the exact opposite of Prakash. He was quite thin and given to arguments. Long after the game was over, he would still be raising doubts about the decisions made during the game. Then there were Raghu, Muralidhar, and Anand.

The other boys were new, in the sense that Jagdish and his friends had not known them before the holidays. Jagdish and Kartik's families were the first to move into Varadarajanagar (a new locality, barely a year old) and the other families had arrived much later.

The playground was new, too. Jagdish and his friends had first started playing a week back — just a handful of boys, but slowly the others drifted in. Now there were enough boys to make two modest sized teams, of which Jagdish and Kartik were the captains.

They had divided the playing session into two, due to the hot weather. In the morning, they played from seven to nine o'clock and in the evening, from four to six. Each team played one innings, which meant that one batted in the morning, and the other in the evening.

Kartik's side was batting now and doing fairly well. Prakash had hit one sixer and two boundaries, bringing the total to thirty-two for his side. Two wickets were already down but they had seven batsmen left. Prakash played the last ball rather badly towards the covers and now it was Babu's turn to face the ball.

Babu lifted his bat clumsily and swung it round, as the ball rolled past the wicket harmlessly. And then with the last ball of the over, he was bowled. But, it had no effect on Babu. He wouldn't budge from the pitch. He only respected catches.

"I'm not out!" he maintained stonily.

"But you're bowled!" said Jagdish.

"I don't care. I'm not out!"

"Then don't play. Go home!" snapped Satish.

"All right! Give my ball back!" said Babu. "I'm going." And he grabbed the ball.

"Don't," begged Jagdish. "I say Kartik, do something!"

Prakash was enjoying the situation immensely. Laughter seemed to travel from his head down to his toes. His merriment encouraged Babu further. He put the ball in his pocket and started to move out.

"Hey!" shouted Kartik. "Give back the ball!"

"Let me play then!" said Babu, with a stubborn expression on his otherwise innocent-looking face.

Kartik cuffed him, but Babu remained standing defiantly.

"Okay!" said Jagdish with resignation. "Stay, you're not out!"

Babu beamed triumphantly. Prakash patted him, appreciative of his stubbornness.

"He can't do that!" Satish objected angrily. But,



Jagdish simply muttered something about getting a new cricket ball and only then....

However, it wasn't easy to get a cricket ball. The suburb was new and there were no shops selling sports goods. One had to go to the city for that — something that was always postponed. Jagdish made a mental note to nag his father some more for a cricket ball.

Prakash and Babu batted for quite some time, the former hitting one more boundary to the square leg. Prakash, at last, fell to a ball from Raghu, Jagdish's star bowler. The ball had hit the edge of his bat and sailed neatly into Jagdish's hands. It happened so fast that they all looked slightly surprised.

"Now we can mow them down!" exulted Satish.

But it wasn't so easy. With Babu a permanent

fixture at one end, his team-mates were in good spirits. They played reasonably well, though they didn't add much to the score. By lunch time, they had scored sixty-six for seven. Babu was still at the crease, having survived, through stiff personal resistance, one lbw, a 'run-out, and two 'clean-bowled' decisions. Kartik declared grandly, at 'lunch' (they had to, anyway), and they all went home.

When the game was resumed in the afternoon, Jagdish's team suffered a casualty, so to speak. Anand brought the news that Sebastian wasn't coming. His mother had refused to let him out, because he had run away in the morning without telling her. There were thus only six players left in Jagdish's team, to make sixty-seven runs in two hours.

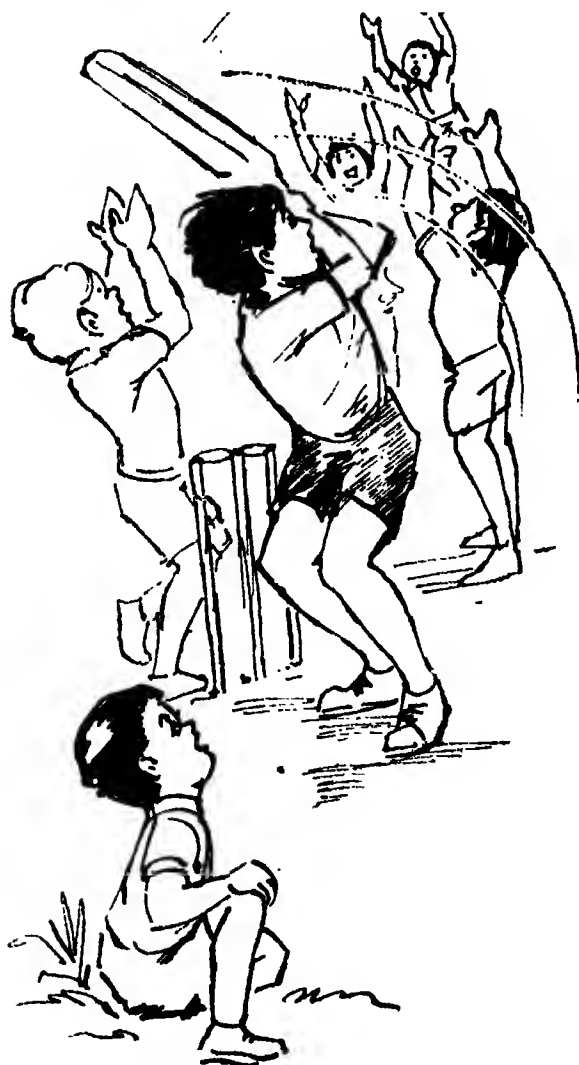
"Try to hit where Prakash is standing," Jagdish advised his team-mates. "But don't attempt the impossible."

The opening pair did exactly what their captain had advised. They made fifteen runs, before Kartik got wise to the tactics and placed an additional fielder near Prakash.

Now, Muralidhar, Kartik's best bowler, moved in to bowl to Satish. Satish leaned on the ball, and sent it to the square-leg boundary. Satish got a single off the next ball. He looked very confident while attempting to play the third ball. But it just went by. The next one was really fast, and Satish hit it straight towards Prakash's slow moving hands. The exertion was too much for Prakash. He held out his hand for form's sake and then promptly dropped the ball to the accompaniment of loud "Ohs" and "Thank god" from Jagdish's supporters. A chastened Satish now batted very carefully. But he was out after a few overs, to a very bad ball from Kartik.

By five o'clock, they had made forty for two and some hope arose for a win. But two wickets fell in the next fifteen minutes, while the score had moved only to forty-four.

Now, they had only two wickets left and twenty-two runs to be made in forty-five minutes. Jagdish and Raghu were the only batsmen left to hold the fort. Babu squealed in anticipation of a catch, every few minutes, making the two players extremely nervous. At half-past five, the score crawled



to forty-eight. Raghu looked tired. He had made only eight runs but had been batting for a long time. Kartik's aggressive bowling was putting him off. Jagdish thought the match would be over in another ten minutes, when the most amazing thing happened.

Jagdish hit a fast ball from Muralidhar. It sailed high, up in the air. Many hands shot up for a catch — but strangely, no one saw it falling. As the puzzled fielders looked for it here and there, Jagdish and Raghu began running, between the wickets, with nervous glances towards the fielders. After three runs, they paused, only to find Kartik and the others still searching for the ball. They grinned at each other and resumed running, with Satish and the others joyfully counting, "four runs — five.... six..... SEVEN...!"



The sun had been bright and had dazzled the eyes of the boys. They didn't know where the ball had gone. A wail rent the air. It was Babu crying. "My ball!" he howled. "I want my ball back."

Just then, Prakash saw the ball. It had been trapped among the branches of a casuarina tree on the side of the playground.

"Hey! I think that's a no-ball!" yelled Kartik. "You can't count those runs!"

"Who says so?" retorted Satish. "Anyway, if Babu can be allowed to stay, when he's out, we can take these bonus runs...nine...ten..." he went on counting, as his team-mates laughed and clapped. Jagdish and Raghu were grinning but continued running.

Prakash rushed to the tree and shook the frail trunk. But the ball stayed firm.

"Shake harder!" cried Babu. "We can catch it when it falls and Jagdish will be caught out!" Babu certainly loved catches.

"Fourteen...fifteen...." came the exultant voices from afar.

Prakash planted his feet wide apart and shook the tree with his massive bulk. The ball stirred. It rolled unsteadily, towards the hands raised upwards in the hope of catching it. Kartik jumped to hold it, but misjudged. The ball rolled down. Kartik ran to it and lifted his arm to throw it to the howler, Muralidhar. But Muralidhar was standing near the tree, far away from the pitch.

Muralidhar raced back to his place with the ball. But by then, Jagdish and Raghu had made twenty-one runs for good measure and the score was now sixty-nine for two wickets, with time to spare. There was great rejoicing and shouting and laughter in Jagdish's team.

A loud argument followed as to whether it was proper cricket. No one could claim that it was a no-ball. The argument on technical grounds came to a standstill. Satish pointed out that if Babu could have so many 'lives' in one innings, why couldn't they use their stroke of good luck? Victory was conceded to Jagdish's team. But, pressure was mounted for a new cricket ball.

The next Sunday, the three fathers from Varadarajanagar, who bumped into one another, at the nearest sports shop, wondered why their children needed three cricket balls, when they didn't even have enough players to make two full cricket teams! They did not know of Babu's condition for lending his ball nor his blackmailing tactics.

*Subhadra Krishnamurthy*

# ROVER: The Dog

## That Forgave

**W**HEN Eric was born, Rover was already a part of the family. And even before Eric was one day old, he became Rover's complete responsibility. Rover was of no known breed. He was middle-aged and had set habits. But the dog was dedicated in his care of Eric.

His mother could leave him in his pram anywhere in the garden, confident that no one would get near him, with Rover 'on duty'! When Eric was old enough to walk,

Rover supervised his expeditions. The dog decided the boundaries which were safe for Eric. Whenever he tried to cross them, the dog would take Eric's hand in his mouth—gently but firmly—and pull him back! When Eric saw his first wild west cowboy film, he decided that the dog was a horse, and began attempting rides on him. Rover, in short, was the most understanding friend a boy ever had.

After Eric started going to school, Rover got some time of his own. He was also getting old. His eyesight began to fail and he lost his usual zest. As long as possible, Eric's parents ignored the vet's advice to put him to long sleep. They agreed it was the best thing to do, but in their heart of hearts they loved Rover as much as they loved Eric.

Then, one autumn Sunday, they set out in their car for the place where Eric's father, Mr. Martin, usually went shooting with Rover. Eric did not notice anything strange



until his mother said to his father, "It's better this way. Let's put him to long sleep."

Eric's father took a deep breath, but he did not answer. These trips were always a sort of holiday. That day, however, Mr. Martin did not joke or tell stories. When Rover got out of the car, Eric's mother patted him on his head, opened a book right-away and started reading it. Mr. Martin walked off through the trees, without looking back or waving as he usually did. As on earlier days, Rover stayed close to his heels.

Eric heard his father's first shot soon after he left the car. "Daddy must have seen something straightway," Eric said to his mother.

His mother nodded her head and without looking up from her book, she blew her nose. Eric could never understand why his mother read books that made her cry.

Then Eric saw Rover trotting back towards him. His mother seemed surprised. When Rover got within about three metres of the car, he stopped. Eric could see a spot of blood grow bigger, each moment, in the fur just below his hip. He was hurt. Eric and his mother started to get out of the car, but Rover showed his teeth and growled, as if they were his worst enemies.

Mr. Martin came running through the trees. Rover then turned on him, snarling and barking. Mr. Martin tried walking round to the other side of the car, but Rover kept going round him. He would not let Eric and his mother get out, nor would he let Mr. Martin in.

Mr. Martin got down on his knees and started to talk gently, trying to coax the dog away from the car. Rover wagged his tail, then turned round and barked at something underneath the car. Mr. Martin's mouth opened wide, and he had the strangest look on his face.

"Very good, very good," he said with great excitement. "I see him, come here boy!"

Rover ran to Mr. Martin. There was a long poisonous snake under the car waiting to strike at Mr. Martin. He raised his gun and shot down the snake.

Mr. Martin picked up Rover and carried him to the car. He explained to Eric's mother that he had tried to finish Rover in one clean shot, but could not see clearly as he

## TARZAN

**D**URING World War II, in a secluded coastal village, there lived an old lady, all alone in her cottage. Afraid of enemy spies, she bought a trained whitish-grey alsatian. She named the dog Tarzan. The old lady had a favourite rocking chair near a big window. Tarzan, too, liked to sit in the chair. He liked the thick mattress on it.

Quite often, Tarzan refused to jump out from the chair. He would just close his eyes, and pretend that he was asleep! The old lady could not drag him out. He was too heavy. So, she would look out of the window and suddenly shout, "Tarzan! Tarzan! Look who's coming. Hey, who are you?" Tarzan, with a big leap, would then rush out. His mistress would quickly occupy the chair!

One day, the lady was enjoying the sunshine filtering through the window. Rocking in the chair, she dozed off. Suddenly, she woke up. Tarzan, with his front paws on the window-sill, was barking excitedly. The startled old lady got up from the chair, and peered out of the window. She did not see anyone, and decided to sit back. It was then that she saw Tarzan lounging in the chair. His happy eyes were looking at her, and he was wagging his thick tail triumphantly.

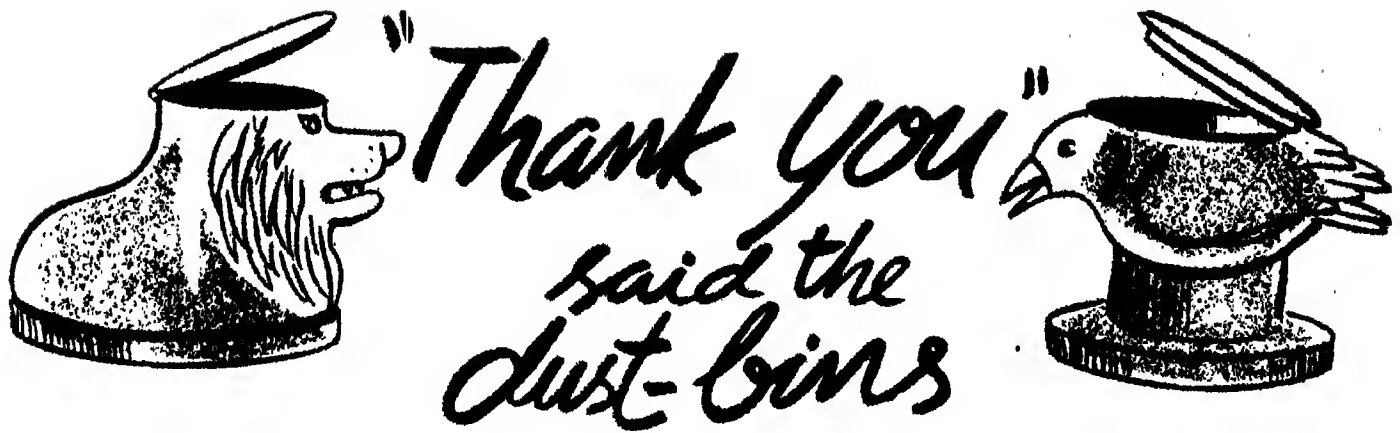
V.D.

was crying. Mr. Martin held Rover on his lap and his wife drove them back to town.

The vet bandaged Rover's wound and within a week, he was in good shape once again. After this incident, Rover would appear the happiest when he was with Mr. Martin. It seems he wanted to let Mr. Martin know that he understood the shooting incident in the woods and had forgiven him.

Rover lived for another year. Then he quietly died one night in his sleep. Sadly, they buried him under the tree where he used to look after Eric as a child. Eric still preserves the stuffed snake in his study to remind him of the loyalty and forgiveness the old dog had displayed that fateful day.

G.V. Joshi



**T**HE Mayor of the city looked worried. The City Fathers, too, seemed to be in an agitated state of mind. Yes, they had a serious problem on their hands.

The Mayor was talking to them. "I don't know what to do. All our efforts have failed. The people simply do not listen to our words. We got posters printed and put up at all important places. We flashed our messages through the TV network. We inserted advertisements in the dailies. But, the message does not seem to have reached the people. They still leave rubbish all around the park. There are dust-bins—big, large ones—at all nooks and corners of the park. People have only to walk a few steps, press with their feet the levers at the bottom of the bins, and when the lids open up, they have just to dump the litter in them," he said with a sigh.

He shook his head and continued, "Such a simple operation, yet people seem to dislike it. They just throw bits of paper, paper cartons, and peels of oranges, apples, and bananas, here and there on the green grass in the park. Every time I visit the park after dusk, particularly on a holiday, the place stinks. What can we do?" The Mayor complained.

"We can post our men in the park on holidays. We can impose heavy fines on those who throw litter around," suggested one of the Elders.

"Oh, no. What I seek is a change of heart. It has to become a habit with the citizens. They should, on their own, seek the dust-bins. Only then can we truly say that we have educated the people," the Mayor remarked.

"That'll be the most ideal thing to do. But, how do we inculcate this habit in the people?" asked another Elder.

"We have to find a way. We have to do something that will catch the imagination of the people, something that will give them pleasure from dumping litter into the dust-bins," the Mayor explained.

"In other words, we must induce and draw them towards the dust-bins. That's not easy. Dust-bins are not beautiful things! They look dull and drab. They are tolerated, but never accepted," remarked an official, wryly.

"Can't we give a better look to the dust-bins?" the Mayor asked.

"I have an idea," a small man cut in.

"Come on, let's hear your suggestion," said the Mayor.

"Suppose we give some shape to the dust-bins? They are plain cylindrical cans, and though painted bold red, they all look alike. If we design the dust-bins to resemble, let's say animals and birds, children will take a fancy to them. They may run to them to take a look at their favourite animals. They may coax their parents to go with them on the pretext of dumping litter in the bins. Thus, less litter will be left on the grassy lawns and the smooth footpaths, and more litter will end up in the dust-bins."

"That's a very good idea," the Mayor commented, "and we must try it out."

"Of course, it's a good idea," said a tall man in the group, "but I think we can further improve on it. We can use some gadgets to make the dust-bins irresistible for children. Like making the dust-bins talk!"

"What?" exclaimed everyone.

"Yes, the dust-bins should talk. They should talk to anyone who comes and uses them," the man repeated.

"But, how would you make the dust-bins talk?" the Mayor enquired.

"That is where modern technology comes in. If we can connect the dust-bins to pre-recorded tapes—every time a dust-bin is used, it would speak out. As soon as the lever is pressed and the lid goes up, the dust-bin, shaped like an animal or bird, would give out the sound made by that animal or bird. If it is shaped like a lion, it would roar; if it is like a pig, it would grunt; if it is like a sparrow, it would chirp. The dust-bin should also say, 'Thank you. My! That tasted good! I sure am hungry. Can you find something more for me to eat?'"

The Mayor smiled. His colleagues, too, were happy. Soon new dust-bins, shaped like lions and pigs and sparrows, were made. They were even painted to look like the creatures they resembled. Then they were installed and connected to recorded tapes.

The people who came to the park the next Sunday were fascinated by the new dust-bins. They were delightfully surprised when they 'spoke' as soon as they pressed the levers. They heard the 'lion' roar. They heard the 'pig' grunt. They heard the 'sparrow' chirp. And then they heard the dust-bin say, "Thank you!... My..... That tasted good! I sure am hungry. Can you find something more for me to eat?"

The children ran back and forth. They collected all the litter they could find, and dumped it in the bins. Not a single piece of paper, not a single bit of fruit skin was left on the lawns or on the footpaths. Everyone had a merry time. Children took a great fancy 'feeding' the 'Talking Dust-bins.' For them it was real fun!

Late at night, after the holiday crowd had gone away, the Mayor visited the park. He was very pleased at what he saw—or what he did not see there! The park was clean.

The 'talking dust-bins' had turned out to be a wonderful idea.

*R.K. Murthi*

**C**HUG, chug, chug, chug went our open tourer, merrily down the road from Agra to Jhansi. Chug, chug, chug, chug. The hood was down to keep out the chilly December wind. The blinds were drawn. Inside the tourer sat our family: father, mother and we three sisters. At the wheel was Diler Singh, our old and trusted driver. He had been with us for years and we all liked him.

It was early in the morning and a thin mist hung in the air. The roads were deserted. "We're in good time," said my father. "If all goes well, we shall be in Jhansi by six in the evening." Perhaps I was the only one to notice it, but at these words Diler

## A DAY TO REMEMBER

Singh bowed his head and his lips seemed to whisper a prayer.

Soon, we had left the town far behind and moved into a world of wheat fields and clear blue skies. Villages rolled past. So did the bunches of children who stood by to watch us go. Chug, chug, chug, chug, said the tourer as it raced the birds overhead. Chug, chug, chug, chug as the wind whistled through the trees. Inside the car we clapped our hands in glee. It was a beautiful day and we were off to Jhansi to spend a glorious week with one of our uncles. What could be better?

At midday, we pulled up by a mustard field all dotted with yellow, unpacked our lunch, and feasted on 'puri-alu'. Mother and father had some tea out of a thermos flask. They gave a cup to Diler Singh, too. He sipped it thoughtfully as he sat under a



clump of Babul trees. Presently he stood up. "Sahib," he said to my father, "I think we should be on our way. This road is not safe after dark."

His words rang like a warning bell. All of us piled quickly into the car, and this time Diler Singh drove a bit faster than before. We came within sight of the giant fortress of Gwalior and raced through the streets below it.

Two o'clock, said my father's wristwatch. Soon we were out of Gwalior and on our way to Shivpuri. The houses thinned out and on both sides of the road, the jungle took over. The ground was covered with a kind of red clay that blew in great clouds under the wheels of the tourer. The same dust had coated the trees and they looked strange, half-green, half-red.

I think we were passing through a particularly dense bit of jungle, when the first tyre was punctured. Diler Singh fixed it, working at lightning speed. But the second puncture took longer, because it was more like a burst tyre, and we had to wait at a wayside shop for the tube to be repaired.

Once again, the tourer was on its way. But we had lost valuable time. The sun no longer shone bright on the roads and the chilly wind told us that evening was coming. The landscape changed, too. The plains gave way to hillocks covered with boulders. The lush green trees were replaced by thorny bushes and clumps of grass. Very often we looked into the mouth of a ravine that dipped and rose, dipped and rose again. There were no villages in sight and even on the road, for miles and miles, we met not a soul.

We turned a bend and suddenly found the road blocked by a huge pile of boulders. Before we had time to think, there was a wild shout from somewhere to the left of the car. A man came running and leapt on to the footboard. "Not that way," he ordered, "the road is under repair." At his direction, Diler Singh turned the tourer sharply to the left and began to drive down a mud-

track leading away from the main road.

The man, on the footboard, was about six feet tall and very dark, with gold earrings and a hare-lip. His hands were like claws. I saw Diler Singh draw a deep breath. At the same time my father slipped his pistol out of his pocket. As usual, it was wrapped in a white napkin but the triangular shape was unmistakable.

A five-minute drive brought us to a wide stretch of sand and pebbles, at the far end of which we could just make out a thin stream of water. "A dried-up river-bed," said my father. "I only hope the sand isn't deep." But it was.

All of us got out of the car to lighten the burden, still the wheels kept churning the sand. And finally we fell to pushing the car. There were two men around, grazing a herd of goats, and they helped. But the man with the hare-lip stood apart. Presently he was joined by some others, fierce-looking fellows in turbans and moustaches. They stood talking in groups and, young that I was, I felt a chill of fear even to look at them.

When we reached the stream, the sun had already dipped below the trees. Diler Singh whispered to my father, "Sahib, all of you must get in quickly. I shall race the car through the stream. It's now or never!"

"What do you mean?"

"I'll explain later. Just get in."

Diler Singh leapt into the driver's seat, and pressed the accelerator. The car shot like a bullet through the water, sending the spray flying. We reached the other bank and climbed up to safety.

"Ah," said Diler Singh slowing down, "now you can turn round and look."

We did so, but the scene behind us had changed completely. We saw a sheet of water where there had been a shallow stream.



"What on earth...?" began my father.

"Oh, it's a long story," said Diler Singh. "This area is full of dacoits. From time to time they erect road-blocks and force vehicles on to this river-bed. While the vehicles

struggle with the sand and boulders, the dacoits simply look on. They always wait till evening before mounting an attack."

"But why?" we all asked together.

"There is a barrage upstream," said Diler Singh. "Every evening, at about six, it releases a vast quantity of water for irrigation, making this stream impossible to cross. The vehicles are trapped and that's when the dacoits get down to work."

There was a shocked silence and then my father found his voice. "How did you know about it?"

"I have seen it happen," said Diler Singh. "I was brought up in a village not far from this place."

*Pratibha Nath*

*(Courtesy: Writers Workshop)*



# THE MILLET THIEF

**T**HERE lived a rich merchant, in a large house at the outskirts of a town. Behind the house was a beautiful garden where grew many kinds of flowering plants, vegetables, fruit-bearing trees, and even food crops. He was especially proud of a plot where he grew millet.

One day, in late spring, while he was admiring his garden, he was shocked to see a quarter of his millet crop, all ready for harvesting, uprooted by someone. He was furious and decided that the culprit must be caught and punished. He called his three sons, Michael, George, and John, and told them that they must take turns at keeping a vigil in the night.

The first night, the eldest son Michael took with him a gun and hid himself in a bush near the millet field. But soon he felt drowsy and fell asleep. Next morning, when he woke up, he found to his horror another patch of the millet crop chopped off its root. His father was very cross with him for his irresponsible behaviour. "I wish the thief had carried away you and your gun along with the millet," he said angrily.

That night, it was the turn of the second son, George. He carried a knife and a cudgel when he went to the garden to keep a watch. But, he too fell asleep soon. When he woke up at dawn with a start, he knew it was too late—the millet had again been neatly cropped up by the thief. George got a severe scolding from his father. For, the rate at which the thief was stealing the millet, it would all be wiped out in no time.

The third night, the youngest son John went to guard the remaining crop and try catch the thief. However, in spite of both his brothers' instructions, he refused to carry any weapon with him. He even found a way to keep himself awake—he collected a few thorny bushes and arranged them around himself in such a way that if he were to nod, he would get himself pricked by the thorns!

John thus managed to keep awake. At

midnight, he heard a thumping sound, first at a distance and then nearer and nearer the garden. He peeped from his hiding place, and was taken aback when he saw the most beautiful mare he had ever seen. John went up to the mare and, to his surprise, she did not run away from him. He caught her and led her to the stable and tied her up. Then he went back to his room and peacefully slept for the rest of the night.

The next morning, John proudly went and presented the 'thief' to his father, much to the envy of his brothers. The merchant was quite surprised to see the mare. He was happy that his remaining millet crop had been saved. He asked John to keep the mare for himself. John aptly named the mare 'Thief'!

Nearby there lived a beautiful princess, who was under a spell. She had many suitors, but nobody could approach her because she lived in a castle on top of a very steep mountain. A number of young men had attempted to ride up the mountain, but everyone of them had failed. Even the best horses in the land came tumbling down.

The three brothers had also heard about the princess. They decided to try their luck. Michael and George bought two strong and sturdy steeds and set out to win the hand of the princess. John rode on 'Thief'. He had full confidence in the mare.

When they reached the foot of the mountain, the eldest brother tried his luck first. But before long, both the rider and his horse came tumbling down the mountain. Then it was the turn of George. He managed to go half way up the mountain, but that was all.

The two elder brothers tried to dissuade John from riding up the steep mountain. If their own sturdy horses could not succeed, 'what chance did a mere mare have?' they argued. "'Thief' is not fit for such a hazardous climb," they cautioned him.

But nothing could deter John. He set off bravely on 'Thief', and much to the

surprise of his brothers, the mare climbed steadily up the mountain. John and 'Thief' reached the top of the mountain without much difficulty. And, as though it was a matter of habit, 'Thief' strolled up straight to the front door of the castle. The princess, who had seen them coming, flung open the door. She rushed out and hugged the mare and began scolding her for disappearing for many days!

The princess's beauty took away John's breath. He looked at her completely bewitched. The princess, after patting her mare, turned to John. "I'm very pleased that you've brought back my mare," she said.

"And, my dear princess," said John, "since I've climbed up the steep mountain and you are no longer under an enchantment, may I propose to you?"

The princess nodded happily. She realized how wise and brave and handsome John was. The two were soon married and lived happily ever after.

*(A German Folk Tale  
Retold by Alaka Shankar)*



# UNCLE MOHAN MEETS A JEWELLER

“WELL, well,” my mother greeted us as we reached home, “you have come just in time to bring the carpets in.”

Uncle Mohan, Ramu and myself heaved the clean carpets up and brought them back into the rooms. This time we did not laugh or joke. My Uncle was looking grave.

“Mohan,” said my mother, as we sat down for tea, “I hope everything is fine, because while you were away, my little finger itched so much that I had to apply some cream.”

Uncle Mohan stared at her over his cup of tea. “Mauju,” he said softly, “something did happen, and happen for the first time in my life.”

And then we told her everything. My mother smiled and looked at Uncle, who sat there looking sad and happy at the same time, like the young and lovely artist we met at the exhibition.

“I want to buy that painting,” he said, “but it may cost a lot of money.”

I did not have much money in my piggy bank. But I told him that he could have whatever I had.

“Thank you, dear,” he smiled at me, “that’s very nice of you. Eleven rupees and fifty paise is certainly a lot of money, but it’s not enough to buy a painting!”

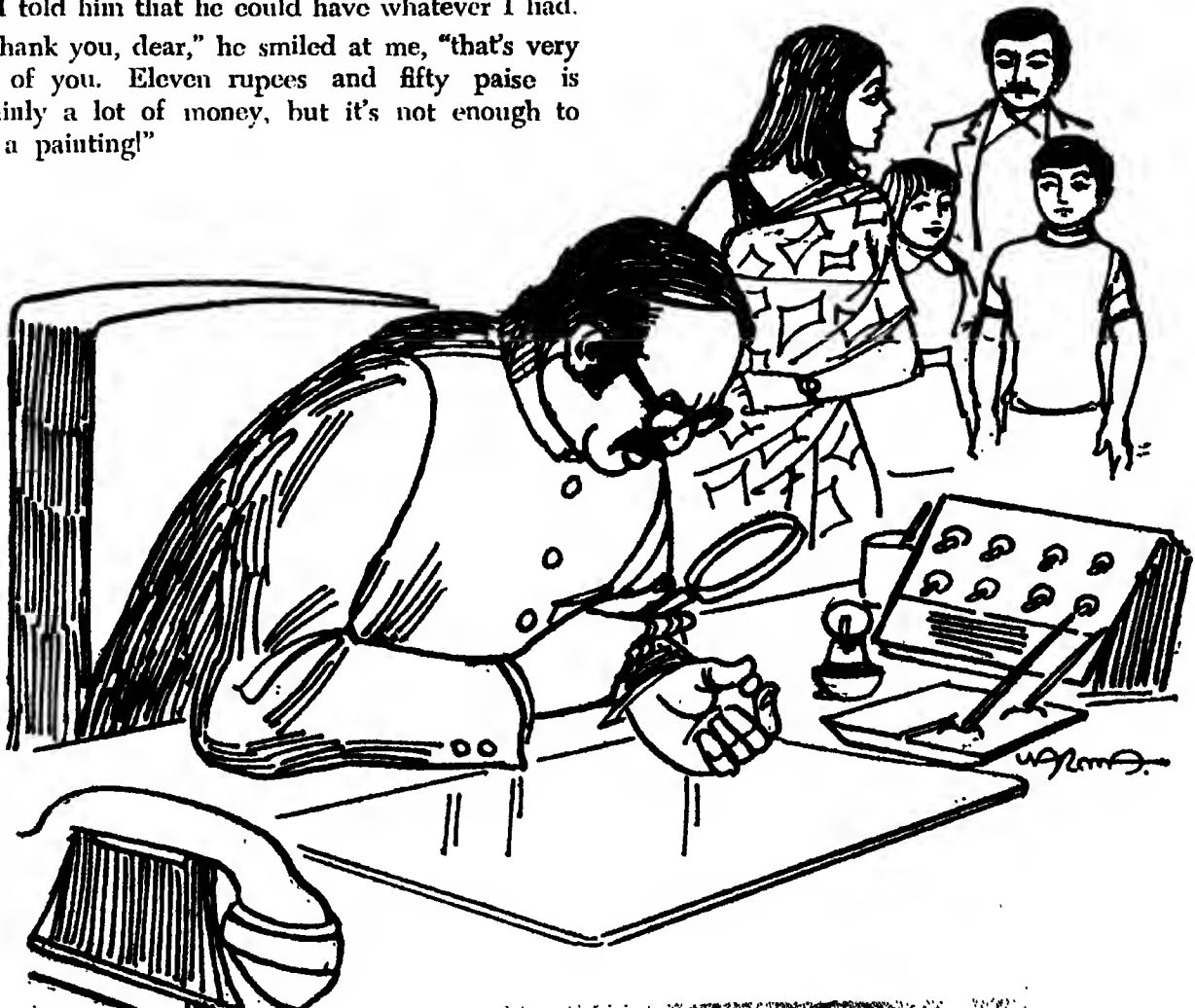
We put our heads together, and thought till, finally, I remembered the Gulu-Gulu Diamond.

“The Gulu-Gulu Diamond!” Uncle Mohan cried. “That’s it, yes. I had nearly forgotten about it.” He clapped his hands. He did not look sad anymore. We had another helping of tea and decided to sell the Gulu-Gulu Diamond the next day.

The next morning, Uncle Mohan took out the diamond from his yellow suitcase and wrapped it carefully in a hanky.

“No, Mohan,” my mother caught hold of his hands, “if you want to sell the diamond, you must show it off.”

She then searched her cupboard for a long time and finally found what she was looking for, tucked away along with her wedding saris. It was a tiny red box lined with dark blue velvet. She dusted it carefully and placed the diamond in it. It was sparkling and shining like a star. My Uncle took the box and my mother whispered ‘good luck’



and something more which sounded like a 'mantra'.

We accompanied Uncle Mohan to the market. There we stood for some time in front of Dhuma Lal Jewellery shop, admiring the gold bangles, ruby rings, and diamond necklaces in the showcase. They were shining as brightly as the sun. My hands grew cold with awe.

Uncle Mohan opened the door and we entered confidently. The room was full of sales girls and assistants standing around some ladies, who were trying out sparkling rings and beautiful necklaces and looking approvingly at themselves in the mirrors they held in their hands.

"Good morning, sir," a young sales girl approached us and smiled at us.

"Good morning," said Uncle Mohan and returned her smile.

"May I help you?" asked the girl, still smiling.

"I would like to see the manager, please," said my Uncle, business like.

"Very well, sir," the girl replied. "Please follow me."

We followed her into a separate room, where a fat man with a heavy moustache sat behind a large table. He was looking through a magnifying glass at something in his hands.

"Our manager, Mr. Bora," said the girl and left us.

The man continued to look at the thing he held between his fat fingers. After some time, he shook his head and replaced what seemed to me a glass bead in an envelope.

"Yes?" he asked and looked at Uncle Mohan.

"I am Mohan Patel," said my Uncle. "I have a favour to ask of you. I have a diamond and would be grateful if you would take a look at it."

"Well, Mr. Patel," said the man, "to tell you frankly, we buy our gems only from reliable sources."

"But excuse me, sir," Uncle Mohan raised his voice a bit, "I have come to seek your opinion as a gem valuer. I do not really wish to sell the stone."

I gasped and looked at my Uncle, who smiled at me and squeezed my hand. He took out the red box from his coat pocket and pushed it across the table.

Mr. Bora opened the box, took a close look

inside, and gasped. "May I take it out?" he asked.

"Sure," said my Uncle and looked cool and disinterested.

The manager carefully removed the stone from the little box and placed it in his palm. He looked at it from all angles; he held it against the light, and peered at it through his eye-piece.

He nodded, not once but twice. "You have a very fine piece of diamond," he told Uncle Mohan.

"Yes, it's from Africa. You know it has the best diamonds in the world."

Mr. Bora looked at the diamond more closely, now with a little more interest.

"It's the famous Gulu-Gulu Diamond," my Uncle said. "What do you think would be its value?"

"That is difficult to say," replied Mr. Bora. "Let me ask my experts." He pressed a button on the intercom on his table and called out: "Miss Rashmi, send Mr. Ghosh and Mr. Datta."

The two men came in together. They, too, inspected the diamond from different angles, and spoke of 'carat' and 'purity' and other things. One of them said 'twelve thousand', and the other one whispered 'fifteen'. They shook their heads again and again as if they were stunned and could not take their eyes off the stone.

"Well," said Mr. Bora, "this is almost priceless. I think its value must be around twenty thousand rupees."

"Twenty thousand rupees?" asked my Uncle Mohan. "I can't believe it."

I could also not believe that a single stone could be worth so much. But my Uncle sounded as if he was very disappointed!

"Well," Mr. Bora tried to put him at ease. "We still have to weigh the stone, you know." And then he leaned over the table and said, "This is a nice little diamond, Mr. Patel. I wish you were interested in selling it. I am holding an exhibition next month and I would like to display a pure African diamond."

"Well," said my Uncle coolly. "If I am offered a good price, I might consider parting with it."

"Wonderfull! Wonderfull!" cried Mr. Bora. "Sit down, Mr. Patel. Have something to drink. What would you like to have, children, coke?"

Ramu and I looked at Uncle Mohan, who nodded his head.

Mr. Bora pressed the button again and ordered, "Miss Rashmi, three cokes, please."

And then he continued to talk to Uncle Mohan about the diamond. After we had finished our drinks, my Uncle and Mr. Bora shook hands. "Well, let's close the deal at twenty-two thousand rupees. You can come after three days, and I will have completed all the formalities by then."

Mr. Bora accompanied us all the way to the door. He also invited us to his exhibition. Uncle Mohan promised that we would go on the opening day. We then turned and went down the road without saying a word. The moment we were out

of sight of the shop, my Uncle gathered both of us in his arms and swung us round and cried, "We'll be rich! We'll be rich! Children, let's celebrate."

The passers-by stared at us when they saw the three of us in the middle of the road, and all excited!

Suddenly, my Uncle became serious. "No, children, first we have to go somewhere."

"Yes," shouted Ramu and I together. We had guessed where Uncle Mohan wanted to go!

*Sigrun Srivastava*

## LAUGH WITH US!

The teacher asked Rahul: "Do you know the plural of 'man'?"

"Yes, ma'am, it's 'men'," answered Rahul.

"And, what is the plural of 'child'?"

"Twins," answered Rahul.



Ramesh: "Do you think I am a perfect idiot?"

Anup: "Never. Who on earth can be perfect?"

A teacher was explaining how heat makes things expand and cold makes them contract. "Give me an example, Hari," he said.

"Sir, in summer the days are long, and in winter they are short."

*Niti Srivastava*

Teacher: "How do you like your new house?"

Student: "Oh, I like it very much. I have a room of my own, and my sisters have rooms of their own. But poor Mum, she's still in with Dad."

A schoolboy once wrote a postcard to his mother. It read: "I received your nice, long letter. Thank you. I will answer it as soon as I find time to read it."

Teacher: "Which is the strongest water power in the world?"

Student: "My mother's tears."

*Sanjay Kwatra (11)*

Teacher: "I don't see how you can make so many mistakes single-handed."

Tom: "It was not single-handed. My father helped me."



Aunty: "Here, Willie, have another sweet."

Willie: "No, aunty, my stomach is full."

Aunty: "Well, then put some in your pocket."

Willie: "No, thank you, aunty, they are also full."



Teacher: "Goodness, Kumar, haven't you finished cleaning the blackboard yet? You've been cleaning it for half-an-hour."

Kumar: "I know, but the more I clean it, the blacker it gets."



Policeman (to child): "Hey, kid, what'll you become when you grow up?"

Child: "A general in the army."

Policeman: "But that is dangerous, you know. The enemy shoots at the soldiers."

Child: "All right, I will be the enemy."

*P. Raghu Raman (12)*

# The Impossible Can Happen!

**T**HERE lived a potter in a small town of north India. An expert in his craft, he made lovely looking earthenware. His vessels were the talk everywhere. People came from far and wide to buy his 'gharas' and 'surahis'.

Besides being a clever craftsman, the potter, though of humble circumstances, had noble qualities. Despite his own fame and the popularity of his wares, he remained unaffected by any pride. He never overcharged his customers. In fact, the price of his earthenware was much lower than that charged by other potters. People knew they could depend on his wares and would never be cheated with inferior stuff. Even if he were to hear any unkind remarks about his work, he would never get angry, but remained polite in speech and behaviour.

In the same town there were three young boys. Vijay, Shankar and Ram were lazy and would often spend their time wandering in the market-place. One day, as they roamed about, they carried on a heated discussion, in the course of which Vijay pulled up the other two and they were angry with him. It so happened, at that time they

were passing by the potter's shop.

Vijay turned to them and said, "You both got angry over such a trifle. Look at this potter. Have you ever seen him get angry?"

Shankar and Ram were not prepared to take him at his word. "There can't be anybody who does not get angry at least once," Shankar commented.

"No, Vijay," Ram remarked, "you're just trying to change the subject."

"Nothing of that sort!" protested Vijay. "And I can prove that this potter here will never get angry. In fact, I am game for a bet!"

Shankar and Ram also agreed to the suggestion and took a bet with Vijay for five rupees. The three then moved to the potter's shop. He stopped the wheel on which a jar





was slowly taking shape, and smiled at them.

The youngsters began examining his wares one by one. They would lift a pot, turn it on all sides, tap it to test its sound, and keep it back, looking dissatisfied. They kept up a conversation with the potter and he could the least guess that they were out to test him and did not really intend buying anything from him.

As Shankar was examining a 'surahi', he handled it so carelessly that he broke it at its neck. He didn't even say "sorry", but very casually asked the potter its price.

"Five rupees, sir," he said, and continued to smile at him, without as much as a flicker of anger on his face.

Ram, in the meanwhile, had picked up a 'ghara' and before anybody could realise what was happening, he just let it slip from his hands. It fell down and broke into pieces.

The potter sat there calm and composed, without uttering a single word of curse or rebuke.

"What is its price?" Ram asked, as if such happenings were common.

"It's two rupees, sir," said the potter, all polite.

Shankar and Ram together pulled out seven rupees and offered it to the potter for the two items they had broken. To their surprise, he refused to accept it. When they insisted, he merely waved his hand and said, "Your parents must have given you the money for buying something. How will you explain to them if you were to go back empty-handed?"

The two boys felt ashamed of themselves, of their behaviour. "We're very sorry for our carelessness," they said, full of remorse. You have really shown us how one need not be angry even under trying conditions."

As the three youngsters retraced their steps, Shankar and Ram turned to Vijay. "You were quite right, Vijay. We unnecessarily got angry with you. We've lost the bet. Here's five rupees."

"Oh, forget it, friends," Vijay said. He was beaming with joy. "I'm only happy that I could convince you."

*M. M. Puri*

## "LITTLE AMBASSADORS"

A MONTH'S stay in a country thousands of miles away from home, among children speaking a different language and having different customs is indeed a dream come true for anyone. This was particularly so for the five Indian children, all between 11 and 13, who were winners of the Soviet Land Nehru Awards for painting for 1977. "We were so happy and at home among Soviet children that we hardly missed our homes and our parents!" This is how they reminisced when I met them a day after they returned from the Soviet Union.

The five "little ambassadors", Master B.N. Ram Prasad from Hyderabad, Master Pankul Rastogi, Delhi, Master Sanjeev H. Patel, Baroda, Miss Shailaya Dinesh Mehr, Baroda, and Miss Sanjivani V. Parolkar, Chalisgaon, spent a month in the Young Pioneer Camp in Orlyonok on the Crimean coast.

At the Camp they never felt the 'language barrier' and they made a number of friends. They took part in several excursions, trekkings, and campfires. In Sochi, they visited a sports centre where preparations for the Moscow Olympics were going on.

Pankul Rastogi, the tallest in the group, described the special training he received in para jumps. Shailaya recalled the India Day at the Camp, when they prepared Indian dishes, held a mini Indian exhibition, and gave a typical song and dance performance. Sanjivani was more fascinated by the musical instruments played by Soviet children.

The children found that side by side with the fast pace of industrialisation, there was so much of care and love given to the young in the Soviet Union.

*Leela Menon*

ON THE FACING PAGE: Top: Vikram Gandhi of Bombay and Niti Desai of Ahmedabad were India's delegates to 'Gumbooya' — the Red Cross Youth International Conference recently held in Sydney. The 66 delegates, drawn from 10 countries in the Asian and Pacific region, were all between 13 and 18 years. An Aboriginal word, Gumbooya means 'meeting place'. The Conference commemorated the 150th birth anniversary of the founder of Red Cross, Jean-Henri Dunant.

Below: The five Indian children who spent a month at the Young Pioneer Camp in Orlyonok.

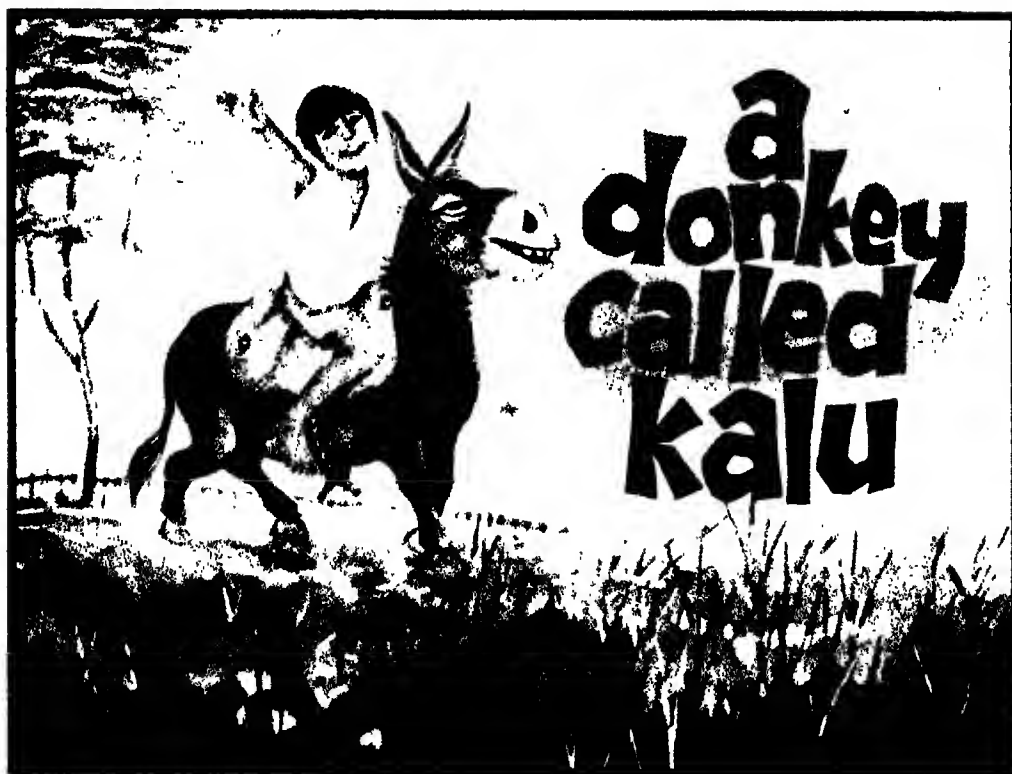
Indian  
Children  
at  
“Gumbooya”  
and  
Orlyonok

*(See story alongside)*



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Editor  
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# THE RARE GIFT

**I**N a deep jungle in Kerala there lived a woodcutter named Raman. He lived all by himself and led a simple life. He earned his livelihood by chopping wood and selling it in the town.

One day, while searching for a tree that had good wood, he came across a unique mango tree. Unique because it had ripe, juicy mangoes at a time when no other mango tree in the land bore any mangoes. He was very excited with his find and wanted to share his happiness with someone whom he deeply loved and respected.

He decided to pluck some sweet ripe mangoes and present them to the king. He got a clean basket and filled it up with the fruit. Covering it with leaves, he went in the direction of the palace.

But alas, he could not reach the king as easily as he had expected. At the palace gates, he was stopped by a guard. "Who are you?" he asked Raman.

"I'm a woodcutter," replied Raman.

"What do you want here?" the guard asked him harshly.

"I've come with a unique gift for the king," Raman replied humbly.

"You can't go through the gates unless you give me half of the gift," the guard stated.

"But that's not possible," exclaimed Raman.

"Well, then, your going through the gates will also be not possible," the guard said haughtily.

"Let's come to a settlement," Raman said. "I'll give you one-fourth of the gift."

"All right," said the guard gruffly. And so poor Raman had to give up a part of his gift.

He walked through the garden to the main entrance of the palace and asked for an audience with the king. The guard there stopped him and asked him the purpose of his visit. Raman told him of the rare gift he was taking for the king.

The guard was curious about the gift and

said he would not let Raman through unless he gave him half of the gift. Raman again pleaded and said he could give him only a share of whatever he was carrying.

To this the guard agreed, and after gleefully taking the ripe mangoes, he let Raman pass through.

But poor Raman was to face more obstacles. Outside the door of the king's chamber stood another hefty and serious-looking guard.

"Who has given you permission to come upto here?" he demanded.

"The guards at the gate and at the palace entrance let me through," Raman said, feeling a little scared.

"And why do you wish to see the king?" the guard demanded.

"I've brought a rare gift for him," replied Raman.

"Well," the guard said, lowering his voice, "I'll let you pass only if you give me half of the gift."

Raman was shocked to see that the king had such corrupt guards. But that was none of his business. Right now his objective was to reach the king with his gift. So, he pleaded with the guard and parted with another share of the fruit.

Finally, he stood before the king himself, whose delight at seeing the mangoes showed all over his face. "What do you want as a reward from me? These are the most beautiful mangoes I've seen this year. And at this odd time of the year!"

"Your happiness is my reward, sire," Raman said.

"No, no," the king stated firmly. "Ask for a gift and it shall be given."

"Well, your highness," Raman said after thinking for a moment, "I've a clause before I ask for it."

"And what is that?" the king asked.

"I would like to share whatever reward I ask for with three more persons," Raman said very seriously.



"That's a strange thing to say!" the king said. "And what is it you wish for?"

"I would like to get whipped twenty times," said Raman without batting an eyelid.

"That is most interesting," the king said bemusedly. "And who are the three persons with whom you would like to share the award?"

"They are the guard at the gates, the guard at the palace entrance, and the guard outside your door here," Raman replied.

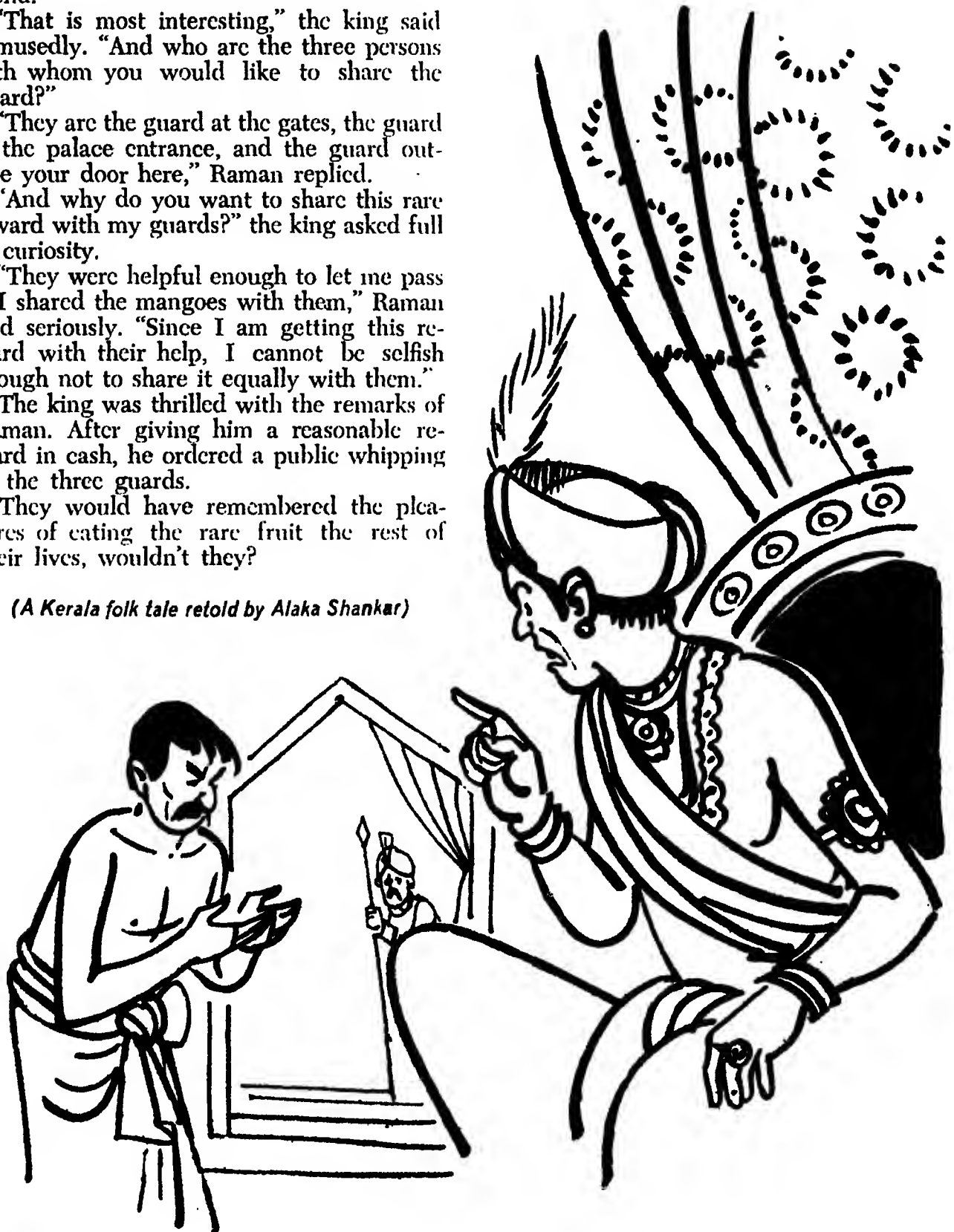
"And why do you want to share this rare reward with my guards?" the king asked full of curiosity.

"They were helpful enough to let me pass if I shared the mangoes with them," Raman said seriously. "Since I am getting this reward with their help, I cannot be selfish enough not to share it equally with them."

The king was thrilled with the remarks of Raman. After giving him a reasonable reward in cash, he ordered a public whipping of the three guards.

They would have remembered the pleasures of eating the rare fruit the rest of their lives, wouldn't they?

*(A Kerala folk tale retold by Alaka Shankar)*



# UNCLE MOHAN MAKES A DEAL

**W**E rushed to the bus stop nearest to the jewellers and took a bus to New Market. From there it was not far to the exhibition.

This time we went straight to hall No. 2 where the young artist was sitting behind a small table. There were no other visitors in the hall. She looked lonely and very sad. Perhaps she had not sold any of her paintings?

When we entered, she looked up. A small smile lit her face. "Hello!" she said and came to greet us.

"Good afternoon," my Uncle Mohan greeted her, but suddenly he seemed to be

groping for the right words! "You see, we have come. I mean we have come to buy the painting. I mean that painting, the self-portrait."

"Oh!" said the young woman and looked at my Uncle and blushed. "Oh, it is **you**! I did not quite recognise you without your sombrero."

Now it was my Uncle who blushed. "I don't wear it all the time. Not when I am out on **business**!"

The artist blushed a little more and turned to look at her portrait and then at Uncle Mohan. "You see, I did not want to sell it. I never thought anybody would want to buy



it either. But if you want it so much, you can have it. Please accept it with my compliments."

"No, no, no!" cried Uncle Mohan. "I really want to buy it. Please name your price."

The young woman gazed at the painting once again, but did not answer.

"Okay," said Uncle Mohan helpfully. "How much did you sell this one for?" He pointed to the portrait of a sleeping child.

"It has not been sold," replied the young woman quietly.

"The one next to it?"

"I have not sold that either."

"Well, then, the one with the woman at the well?"

The artist's face went pale, but her voice was steady as she answered, "That too is unsold."

"Well you must have sold one painting at least," my Uncle sounded desperate.

Her face grew even paler as she said, "No, I have not sold a single painting."

Uncle Mohan dropped his hands and looked at her for a long time before he said, "You have not sold even one painting, yet you want to give away this portrait to me?"

The young woman looked at my Uncle. Her eyes were very dark. "Yes," she said simply, "I want to give it to you."

No one spoke. Neither my Uncle Mohan, nor the young woman. Neither Ramu, nor I. It was as if time stood still. Then, suddenly, my little finger started to itch. Ah! something was going to happen!

"All right," said my Uncle, "I'll take the painting as a present. But allow me to give you something in return. Don't say anything. It is yours now as the painting is mine."

And slowly he pulled out of his coat pocket the little red box and pressed it in the hands of the artist.

Very carefully she opened it and looked at the sparkling Gulu Gulu diamond. "Oh!" she cried and shook her head. "No, no, no," she must have said at least twenty times. She looked up into Uncle's eyes and whispered, "No, please, I cannot accept this." By then her eyes had filled with tears.

"Please don't cry," said Uncle Mohan in a soft voice. "I don't want you to be unhappy. I want you to be happy."

By now I couldn't control myself. I press-

ed my face against my Uncle and cried and cried.

Uncle Mohan knelt down beside me and took my face in his hands. "But, Gita," he said softly, "my little sweetheart, why do you cry?"

All the time he was looking at me. I had the feeling that the words were meant not only for me, but for the young woman who stood behind me. I looked up at her.

"Yes," she said and tried to laugh. "How foolish we women are! We always cry when we are happy."

She pulled out a pink handkerchief and dried her eyes. She then bent down and dried mine. She tickled my nose and said, "Come on, sweetie, laugh. Everything is all right."

Oh, yes, everything was all right.

"Listen," said Uncle Mohan finally, "the young lady has sold a painting today. That calls for a celebration, doesn't it?"

She smiled. "My name is Nalini Prasad. Please call me Nalini."

Uncle Mohan bowed and responded. "I am Mohan Patel. Mohan for you. And this is my little niece Gita, and my nephew Ramu. Do you think you can get away for half-an-hour? We could go and have a cup of tea or ice-cream."

"Why not?" Aunt Nalini nodded in agreement. "Thank you."

She left the exhibition in the care of the gallery peon and came out with us.

The Milk Bar was crowded as usual. But we got some comfortable seats. While we were at our ice-cream, I noticed Aunt Nalini suddenly looking sad and serious. Uncle Mohan, too, seemed to have noticed it.

"Don't worry, Nalini," he said. "I will help you sell all your paintings."

"Oh!" she said. "Selling everything is not that important. If I can sell a few, it will certainly be encouraging. Come, let us go back, some critics may come to see the exhibition."

We took her back to the exhibition, bade her good-bye, and took a bus home.

"Children, I hope you will help me sell the paintings, won't you?" my Uncle said as we entered the house.

"Sure," said Ramu and I.

*Sigrun Srivastava*

# WEDNESDAY

## PA

CHUTPHUT and Shubbles did not like Wednesday one bit. Wednesday was the day when Pa did not whistle while shaving but made horrible grumbly noises. Shubbles thought he sounded like a train going through a very black tunnel. Pa was always cross on Wednesday. His Wednesday forehead was like crumpled silver paper, or so, Chutphut said. You know what crumpled silver paper looks like, don't you?

Wednesday Pa read the newspaper as if it gave him a stomachache. "Why do you read it that way, Pa?" asked Chutphut and Shubbles, but Wednesday Pa only made one of those tunnel noises. Wednesday Pa was like that. . . like crumpled silver paper. And a train going through a very black tunnel.

One Wednesday, Chutphut and Shubbles felt that Pa had got far too crumpled and grumbly. That day, he sounded like two trains going through a very black tunnel. He grumbled and he mumbled, he frowned and he glared, and his Wednesday forehead was so crumpled it might have got torn if he had not gone early to office.

What was to be done? All through that Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and then Saturday, Chutphut and Shubbles kept wondering what they could do with Wednesday Pa.

"Suppose we tear out all the Wednesdays from all the calendars?" said Shubbles.

But Chutphut remembered Pa had a calendar in his office too, and it would have all the Wednesdays in it. They couldn't tear those out.

Then Chutphut had another idea. She said, "Suppose, on Wednesday, we keep saying, 'Today is Tuesday, today is Tuesday', Pa will think it is true and he will be Tuesday Pa, not Wednesday Pa. And Tuesday



Pa always takes us for ice-cream in the evening.

"But Pa's friends will tell him, won't they?" said Shubbles. "And, then, even if it is Sunday, Pa won't believe us and he might ask us to have a bath, get ready for school, and all that."

Yes, that would be terrible. So now, what could they do with Wednesday Pa? The crumpled silver paper and the train going through a very black tunnel? Shubbles and Chutphut thought through Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, but they could not think of anything. They thought about it all Sunday, and Monday, and even when they had ice-cream on Tuesday evening, but they didn't get a single good idea.

Then, on Wednesday morning, Shubbles and Chutphut sprang out of their beds together and ran behind the door which was their secrets' corner. And Chutphut told Shubbles, "Let's also behave like Wednesday Pa."

And Shubbles told Chutphut behind the door, "Let's be Wednesday too."

And so, after brushing their teeth, they both went to drink their milk with their faces like big balloons. Chutphut crumpled up her forehead and Shubbles made noises like an Express train going through a very black tunnel. "Allworkworkworkall the time what do they think am I a machine or what workworkwork. . . ." grumbled Shubbles.

And Chutphut crumpled up her forehead so much that it looked like a geography map.

All through their bath and breakfast. Chutphut and Shubbles were Wednesday. Crumpled silver paper and an Express train going through a very black tunnel. Once Shubbles almost forgot and was about to sing "work work work", but Chutphut kicked him just in time. And so they continued, grumbling and mumbling, frowning and glaring, and all the chairs and tables and books and the breakfast started grumbling and mumbling, and frowning and glaring, too.

But Wednesday Pa was so busy Wednesdaying that he did not notice anything. He just went on like a train going through a very black tunnel and with his forehead like crumpled silver paper. He read the newspaper as if it gave him a stomachache. He frowned and he glared, and he mumbled and he grumbled.

Poor Wednesday Shubbles and Wednesday Chutphut felt very sad. Here they were, frowning and glaring, and mumbling and grumbling, and Pa did not notice it at all. What was the use of Shubbles making noises like an Express train going through a very black tunnel and of Chutphut's forehead like crumpled silver paper? What was the use if Pa did not notice? They were so angry that they glared at him and glared at each other and frowned into all the plates and the cups. And when they went to wash them after breakfast, they made such Wednesday faces at the mirror that the mirror frowned back at them and glared.

And they would have gone on grumbling and mumbling, frowning and glaring if they had not heard a strange noise. And the strange noise was that of Wednesday Pa laughing. He laughed and he laughed, and he sounded like ice-cream and a ride in a double decker bus and like a Sunday at the zoo, all mixed up. He sounded as bright as Monday Pa, as happy as Tuesday Pa, as whistling as Thursday Pa, as merry as Friday Pa, and like Saturday and Sunday Pa rolled into one.

Chutphut and Shubbles stared at Wednesday Pa and couldn't believe their eyes.

Was this really Wednesday Pa? Yes, the calendar said Wednesday, the newspaper also said it was Wednesday and not Saturday or Friday or Thursday or Tuesday or Monday or Sunday. So what was happening to Wednesday Pa? Why was he laughing? And what had happened to the crumpled silver paper and the train going through a very black tunnel?

At last, Wednesday Pa stopped laughing and said, "You should have seen how funny you looked, grumbling and mumbling, and frowning and glaring. Do I look like that, too?"

And Chutphut and Shubbles said, "Only on Wednesdays, Pa."

Then Wednesday Pa started laughing again and laughed all through Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, and right up to the next Wednesday. And on Wednesday, he said, "I think I like laughing better than grumbling and swearing and frowning and glaring."

And so, Wednesday Pa became laughing Pa. And Shubbles said Wednesday Pa was nicer than Tuesday Pa, but Chutphut said, "Tuesday Pa takes us for ice-cream."

*Poile*





## He Wrote for Children

**"S**INCE the day I opened it, the school has become my whole life," wrote Leo Tolstoy, whose 150th birth anniversary was observed all over the world on September 9 last.

The great Russian writer was also an outstanding teacher. In the early sixties of the last century, he organised a school in Yasnaya Polyana, his family estate, where he taught the village children.

Tolstoy has left a truly immense literary heritage. He wrote novels, plays, long and short stories, diaries and letters, treatises and articles, besides his "ABC" and the four books of the "Russian Reader".

These books were written mainly for the children of the peasants whose life he knew so well. Many a time he watched the youngsters writing compositions, and noted they had no use for anything far-fetched or insincere.

Tolstoy started work on the "ABC" and the books for reading in the 1870s. It was

a great undertaking, collecting and selecting material from different fields of knowledge. Then he presented the material in the form of a fable, a story, a description, or a discourse. On top of that, each piece of writing had a definite moral and educational lesson to teach: it glorified human wisdom and labour, goodness and justice, dedication to the Motherland, pride for its history and culture, and love for its nature.

Tolstoy believed that literature for children should be interesting and entertaining. He wrote: "The need for worthwhile content, artistic or educational, is much stronger in children than in adults."

He also paid special attention to the language of children's books. "...I advise using not just common words, the words used by the peasants and comprehensible words; I advise using good, potent words and warn against using inaccurate, vague, and inexpressive ones."

*Vera Nikolayeva*

# Poetess At Thirteen



**I**T is a mother-and-daughter team. The mother is an author. The daughter is a budding poet. Alpana Ansal is only thirteen years old. Her recently published book, "I am thirteen", comprises the poems she has been composing since she was nine years. The title, chosen by her mother, Kusum Ansal, was inspired by the film "The Sound of Music". Alpana's birthday is on January 9. Her mother had made plans to publish the book on her own and release it before the birthday, and the title was to have been "Going on Thirteen", but just then a publisher stepped in, so when her book came out, Alpana was already thirteen! Shy by nature, she does not know that being an author at such a small age means something. She simply says she is happy because her friends are happy.

Alpana's mother, who has been encouraging the writing talent in her daughter, does not interfere, guide, or advise on anything. Alpana whose imagination takes cues from poets like Tennyson and from nature also attempts short stories. Alpana's favourite poem is "Mother".

Mother is a gift so rare,  
I search for words for her  
but they are not there,  
A mother is like the warmth of the sun,  
She is sincerity wrapped in a smile,  
and by this the children's heart she  
has won

a corner of tenderness shared for a  
while,  
a beautiful thought at the start of the  
day,  
a milestone that brightens each step  
of the way.  
She is another name for God,  
a poem unwritten... a beautiful song.

Though Alpana is free to read what she likes, her mother brings classics for her, so that she should know the difference between good and bad. A student of class Eight in the Modern School, New Delhi, Alpana perhaps can claim to be the only girl in her age group in the country with a book to her credit.

Incidentally, Alpana's first ever poem to be published was 'The Swing', and it appeared in the August 1975 issue of 'CHILDREN'S WORLD':

I like to go up the swing  
o'er the wall so wide  
until I can see  
trees and cattle  
and all the countryside.  
Up I go again  
and see the roof so brown  
and here I go down.  
I really love to go up the swing,  
sometimes I go so high  
that I think I will touch the sky  
and make a hole in it.

"Priti"



# THE KITTEN ON THE DOORSTEP



"THERE'S a kitten on our doorstep," said Sush from the front door.

"Sush, dear," said his mother humorously, "It's the middle of September, not the first of April."

"Yes," added his father, laughing. "No kitten would be crazy enough to step into this dog-infested locality, especially in the middle of the monsoon."

"Me wanna chee puddy-mow," chirped Sush's baby sister Ritu, toddling towards the door. "Tu wanna chee a mooww."

But, Niru Didi couldn't imagine Sush joking. Sush with his serious smile..... Joking? Oh, no! Never.

"Sush!" she cried and dashed towards the front door. "Where?"

"On the doorstep," said Sush, lolling against the wall and laughing.

'Miaow,' said an extremely tiny, black bundle of fur with big green eyes. It stood on the doormat and was looking at Sush. It was so tiny it didn't even cover the 'O' of the WELCOME written on the doormat.

"Oh...oh!" breathed Niru Didi, bewitched. "How absolutely *adorable!*"

Sush bent down and held out his palm in front of the little kitten. The kitten jumped on it and looked up at Sush gratefully.

"Meee-ow," it said and curled up and went to sleep.

Niru Didi looked at Sush and smiled.

"Sush," she said, "sometimes I think *you're* the one who should be a vet, not me."

"Maybe I could run a zoo," grinned back Sush. "Then we'd both be in the same job."

"Good heavens," said their mother when they showed her the slumbering kitten. "I

thought you were joking. Where in the world did you get it from, Sush?"

"I was going to check the mailbox for letters," said Sush. "I opened the door and found the kitten sitting on the doorstep. It just sat there miaowing. I think," he added, "it wanted to come in but couldn't reach upto the doorbell."

Sush's father laughed. "What a brave little kitten it must be," he said, "to walk through a place with at least thirty dogs in it."

Suddenly, the kitten opened its eyes. It sat up erect (almost) in Sush's palm. It gazed around at the four faces blissfully.

'Miaow,' it said genially. 'Miaow.'

Niru Didi laughed. "Well, it seems to have adopted us," she said. "Sush at least."

The kitten began to play. It jumped, bounced, and leaped around the living-room. 'Meeec-aa-ow,' it cried ecstatically every now and then. It gave Sush 'Come 'n' play with me' looks.

Ritu was delighted. She chased the bouncy kitten, caught it, cuddled and squeezed it, teased and pulled its tail, and herself 'miaowed' at it. She seemed to have found in it a great companion.

"Puddy, Puddy," she said, much to the surprise of the kitten. "Puddy-mow me's fliend! Puddy-mow, Puddy-miaaaow, will-you-be-my-fliend?"

'Miaow,' said the kitten cautiously.

Niru Didi gave it a bowl of warm milk. Sush converted an old flower basket into a bed with a torn shirt and a ball of not very usable socks. And the kitten lapped up the milk greedily, then jumped into the basket-bed. Cuddling into the folds of the shirt, all warm and sleepy with the milk, it purred itself to sleep.

"No, no, NO!" said their mother, resolutely turning her back on the enchanting sight of the kitten purring in the flower basket. "I refuse to be responsible for the murder of a kitten. Sush, you better find out where it came from and take it there."

"Think of the dogs," said their father, thinking of them himself. "Big ones. Small ones. Horrible, mean ones. They don't

spare *me*...why in the world would they spare a *kitten*?"

"O.K.," said Sush, "I'll try to find someone who will keep it."

He first tried Mrs. Kapoor. "But," said Mrs. Kapoor, "there are dogs all round our house. Where did you get it from? I haven't seen a cat here for fifteen years."

"I'm *so* sorry, Sushrutha," gushed Mrs. Chopra. "You know I *adore* kittens. but I'm really *so* busy and I just can't manage and....."

"I'd love to, Sush," said Mrs. Gupta apologetically, "but we already have three birds and an aquarium, and the problem with kittens is that they soon become cats!"

"Dear me, *beta*," said Mrs. Jain, shaking her head. "A kitten! You should drown it, *beta*. Cats bring bad luck. Especially these black ones," she added darkly.

Sush was too gentle even to think of nasty things about people who suggested drowning kittens. But, when Niru Didi heard, she was plain nasty about what she thought of Mrs. Jain.

"Hush," reproached Mummy mildly, while rolling a chappati in the kitchen. "Really, Niru, sometimes you sound positively vulgar."

"*Vulgar!!!*" exclaimed Niru Didi furiously. She cuddled the kitten protectively against herself. "*That* crazy woman tells us to *drown* our kitten, and you call *me* vulgar??!! *Vulgar!!!*"

"What," interrupted Sush tactfully, "should we do?"

Just then, a growl came from the back garden gate.

"Gwrrrrrrr..." growled a black beast (popularly known as a dog) menacingly.

The devil came to about three feet of the kitchen door, and looked straight at the ten in Niru Didi's lap. And the kitchen was open.

"Oh, no," said Mother wildly. "I *knew* this would..."

But just then the kitten leapt out of Niru Didi's arms and bounced towards the great black beast.

'Good god' whispered Niru Didi, too horrified to move.

Mother closed her eyes. The chappati burned. Ritu toddled closer to the door to take a better look. Father, who had come into the kitchen, left abruptly. Only Sush kept his cool and dashed after the kitten.

But it wasn't a kitten anymore. It was a scratching, fire-spitting, bristly, mean, clawing, snarling bundle of fury. As five pairs of astonished eyes stared, the kitten-turned-monster frightened the big, growling dog into a piteous, whelping canine uttering apologies.

The kitten, with a modest air of one who has vanquished a formidable foe, strutted back to the kitchen. She became a kitten once more and tried to jump into the open arms of Niru Didi.

"Puddy's bwave," said Ritu, patting the kitten.

But the rest of the family was as yet, incapable of speech.

It was the same day, but near dinner time. Sush and his family were seated round the dining table. Ritu sat *on* the dining table, the kitten beside her.

Niru Didi pulled the kitten's ears and said, "Well, kitsy, you should get an award."

"Puddy's Puddy," remarked Ritu with a serious note. "As bwave," she added shamelessly, "as Tu".

Daddy cleared his throat. "She certainly... hem... *can* take care of herself."

Mummy picked up the kitten and cuddled it. Niru Didi winked at Sush who grinned.

"It's sad," he said slyly, "that we have to give her away."

'Miaow,' purred the kitten, who was listening attentively.

Mummy and Daddy blinked.

"And who," challenged Mummy while picking up the kitten, "said anything about giving her away?"

Minnie P. Swami



# The Magic Chant

"SO today is the last day!" said Kishore, tying up his things in a neat bundle.

"Yes, it is," said Prince Kaushik, looking out of the window at the green fields beyond. "And we'll be home, all of us, with new things to do."

It was the time when all children went to the 'Guru griha' for their education. There, in the peaceful surroundings of the woods, the prince and the pauper lived under the same roof, learning the same things. They shared a common love and respect for the 'guru' who taught them and forgot all their social differences. That is how the grocer's son, Kishore, and Prince Kaushik were friends.

Kaushik was simple, intelligent, but not shrewd. He trusted everyone. Everyone was a friend to him. He regarded Kishore as a friend because Kishore seemed devoted to him. Kaushik himself was straightforward, and so did not suspect slyness or dishonesty in anyone else.

"It makes me sad to think that we may never see each other again," said Kishore, looking distressed. "Unless, of course, we visit each other."

"Why not?" said Kaushik. "You'll always be welcome in my house."

"And you in mine," said Kishore. "Why don't you visit me first before you go off to your palace?"

"I will, if you want me to," said Kaushik.

Both lads started for Kishore's house the next day, reaching there just before sunset.

Kishore asked Kaushik to wait outside while he went in to call his parents to welcome him properly. Kaushik stood under a tree, waiting to be called in. But minutes turned to hours and no one came out at all. Kaushik was puzzled and wondered if his friend had forgotten him in all the excitement of home-coming. Then suddenly he heard voices. Many voices. Kishore's parents came out accompanied by his brothers and sisters...and Kishore himself.

"Who is that boy?" asked Kishore's mother pointing at Kaushik.

"And what is he doing there under the tree?" asked Kishore's father sternly.

"Oh! I forgot to tell you about him," said Kishore. "He is the new servant I brought along with me!"

"A servant?" Kishore's father frowned. "We don't need any one! What work can he do?"

"Nothing much, if you ask me," said Kishore. "But I felt sorry for the poor chap and asked him to come along. He can cut the grass for our cows at least."

"He looks hungry," Kishore's mother looked at his tired face. "I'll give him some food."

"Don't spoil him, mother," said Kishore. "Give him plain puffed rice. That's good enough for a servant!"

"And give him some work," said Kishore's father. "I won't have any lazybones in my house!"

Poor Kaushik was too stunned to believe his own ears at first. But he soon realised it was no joke and that he had fallen into a wicked trap set by his friend. But he decided to say nothing for the time being.

"Here," said Kishore, throwing him the sickle, "go and cut some grass for our cows!"

Kaushik picked up the sickle without a word and made for the woods. He wondered at first if he could get away to his own home. But his horse was shut in Kishore's stable. Moreover, it was cowardly to run away. Kaushik decided to stay put for the present and see things through. However, he felt sorry and very depressed. The thought that he had been betrayed by a friend was not a happy one.

He was so lost in thoughts that the sickle slipped from his hand cutting a finger in half. Kaushik groaned as he saw blood gushing out. The pain was more than he could bear.

Just at that moment, Lord Siva and his consort Parvati were going back to heaven after a tour of the world. As the ethereal chariot cut across the clouds, Parvati heard Kaushik groan way down below. "What is that, my Lord?" she asked Siva.

"A lad let down by his friend has hurt himself," said Siva.

"Let us go to him for a moment," pleaded Parvati.

"Very well, if that is what you wish." Siva asked his charioteer to alight in front of Kaushik.

"What is the matter, my son?" asked Parvati.

"Just an accident, mother," said Kaushik wondering who the angelic couple could be.

"Any one to blame for this?" asked Siva looking at him keenly. "Have you been wronged?"

"Oh, no, sir," said Kaushik at once, "just my own carelessness."

"I'll teach you a magic chant to mend your finger," said Parvati. "Just hold it together and say:

'For Siva's sake

Hold fast and strong.

'Till I say so,

Hold hard and long!'"

"The chant will hold true in every case," said Siva. Then before the astonished Kaushik could say a word, the divine couple vanished!

belittle the prince and lord over him. And now there seemed no way of ending the uncomfortable game he had started. He even wondered if Kaushik would not try to pay him back.

Kaushik did intend it. Not so much to 'pay him back' but to teach him that dishonesty and disloyalty do not pay. He soon got a chance. One morning, as Kishore sat in the sun, his sister brought him a bowl of milk. Kaushik was sweeping the floor. He looked up and saw Kishore sipping from the bowl. Kaushik recited the magic



Kaushik blinked his eyes and wondered if he had been dreaming. His finger was bleeding as badly as ever. He decided to try the chant. He said it, and lo and behold! it healed as though the accident had never happened! There was no trace of blood and no pain either! Kaushik blinked again, but he guessed that the gods themselves had come to his rescue.

For a whole month Kaushik lived with Kishore, working all day like a servant. He did not speak to Kishore at all. And Kishore, feeling uncomfortable and ill at ease avoided him. He had originally intended it as a joke, quite expecting Kaushik to flare up and disclose his identity the first day itself. But when he did not speak, Kishore was tempted to

chant softly. The bowl stuck to Kishore's lips at once! He jumped up in surprise and tried to pull it off. It was of no use. The bowl stuck as if it had grown there! He tried to shout, but only a gurgling sound came!

Kishore jumped about the place, making weird noises. His sister heard him and came running. "What's the matter?" she cried. "Why are you biting the bowl like that?" Kishore tried to speak, but couldn't.

"Give me that bowl," said the girl, trying to pull it away. Kaushik saw her catch the bowl and repeated the chant. Instantly her hand stuck to the bowl. She howled wildly and asked Kaushik to fetch her parents at once.

Kishore's father was busy when Kaushik interrupted him and told him his son and daughter wanted him urgently. He frowned but got up and went out. When he saw them struggling with the bowl, he thought they were merely playing the fool. He boxed Kishore's ears—and was unable to move his hands away! Kaushik, watching the fun, had repeated the chant!

Just then Kishore's mother burst upon the scene, rolling-pin in hand. "What is all the noise about?" "And good heavens! What do you mean by pulling my poor child's ears?" She tried to pull away her husband's hand but, to her horror, found her own hand stuck fast to his! She screamed and shouted!

The old cook came out of the kitchen. "For

shame!" she cried as she saw the struggling couple. "Both of you after that young boy! Let him alone!" The cook tried to pull her mistress away and got stuck to her instead! There was real pandemonium! "It must be witchcraft!" shouted Kishore's father.

"Or spirits!" screamed Kishore's mother.

"What are we to do?" cried Kishore's sister. "Father, mother, what SHALL we do?"

Kaushik was the only one who was not affected by this 'witchcraft'—and naturally so! But strangely enough, no one suspected him of any trick either. Finally, Kishore's father decided that they should send for the family priest and ask his advice. He asked Kaushik to go and fetch the priest.

It was almost midnight when Kaushik reached the priest's house. By then it was also raining cats and dogs. The priest was not at all pleased to be disturbed in his sleep and was far from willing to come out at once.

"Whatever the matter is, it can wait till morning," he said yawning.

"But, sir, it is **MOST** urgent," said Kaushik. "The master told me to bring you **AT ONCE**."

"Must be a wedding or a feast of some kind!" said the priest's wife coming into the room. "And they may want you to perform the rites."

"What is it, boy?" asked the priest frowning.

"I was merely asked to fetch you, sir," said Kaushik, evading an answer.

"You'd better go," said the priest's wife, "and



"I shall come, too!"

"You?" cried the priest. "At night, and in this rain? Don't be crazy, woman!"

"I **AM** going," said the priest's wife in a determined voice. "You're always leaving me out of feasts and fun, I'm **NOT** going to miss this one!"

"But I don't know if this is a feast," said the priest grumbling. "The boy doesn't say so."

"Well, it isn't a death!" argued his wife. "Is any one dead, boy?"

"No, madam," said Kaushik truthfully.

"There you are!" cried the priest's wife triumphantly. "It MUST be a wedding then! I WILL come."

It was still raining hard when the three of them started. Kaushik led the way. He suddenly stopped before a puddle. "There is a big puddle here. Madam will get very wet!" he said.

"Well, what do you expect me to do?" shouted the priest. "Carry her?"

"You could take her on your back and jump across," suggested Kaushik. "It's just a step!"

"Now, that's a really clever idea!" said the priest's wife. "I hate walking through puddles."

The priest muttered under his breath and took his wife on his back. Kaushik chuckled and whispered the chant. "Now get off my back," shouted the priest after crossing the puddle. "I can't think WHY you tagged along all this way!"

"I can't get off," said his wife. "I'm stuck!"

As no amount of shouting, cursing, or pleading was of any use, the poor priest had to walk all the way carrying his wife.

Kishore and his people had been anxiously awaiting the priest. They burst out laughing when they saw him come in with his wife on his back. How they laughed! "It's kind of you to have come!" said Kishore's father. "But why are you carrying madam? Is she hurt?"

"Hurt, indeed!" fumed the priest. "The wretched woman refuses to get down!"

"I'm stuck here!" said the priest's wife.

Kishore's father frowned. "You, too, are in the same mess as the rest of us."

"But how can such a thing happen?" fumed the priest. "Someone must know something about it! Ask this servant of yours!" Then it dawned on everyone that Kaushik alone was free from any trouble. Kishore's father begged him to tell the truth.

Kaushik told them the whole story. He then took back the magic chant and freed them from the spell. Everyone begged his pardon, especially the shamefaced Kishore. Kaushik forgave them and left for his home the next day, taking Kishore with him. But this time, everything went off smoothly because they had become real friends at last!

*(A folk tale from Bengal retold by  
Swapna Dutta)*

## THE DEFEAT

ALEXANDER was very happy. He had defeated King Puru of India. His dream to conquer the world was coming true. The evening after the battle, he called his army commander and said, "I have not seen anything of this great country. I wish to go and see the countryside."

"Let me get some soldiers to accompany you," the commander said.

"No, no. I want to see it all by myself. I don't want anyone to go with me." Alexander then changed into ordinary clothes, mounted his horse, and left to 'see' India.

It was dark all around, after the battle, and he could not find a single light in any of the houses. There seemed to be mourning everywhere. But Alexander was the happiest person on earth that night.

He crossed one street and turned his horse in to another and thus roamed the whole town. Then he moved towards the river,

Sindhu.

Alexander was astonished to find some naked 'sadhus' sitting around a fire. 'What are they doing?' he wondered. He went closer and found them wearing only a thin loin cloth. 'Oh, they are poor and don't have anything to cover their bodies with in this winter night.'

Young Alexander felt sorry for the ill-clad sadhus, and thought he must do something for them. He went back to his camp and told his commander, "Get some woollen blankets and thick woollen clothes. And I want them immediately."

"Where can we get them at this late hour?" The commander had a worried look.

"I want them right now!" Alexander was firm.

The town was looted and soon there was a heap of woollen clothes and blankets before Alexander. He himself led a loaded



camel to the banks of river Sindhu. He stood there for some time, but the sadhus noticed neither Alexander nor his camel. They were busy performing their 'puja'. Alexander was perplexed by their indifference. He dismounted and made his way to the oldest of the sadhus. He still didn't notice the great warrior and continued chanting his prayer.

Alexander became impatient. "Oh, holy man, listen," he called out.

"What do you want, young man? What can I do for you?" the sadhu asked him calmly.

Alexander was taken aback. "Well, I don't want anything. Seeing all of you here naked in this cold weather, I couldn't sit quiet. I've brought woollen blankets and clothes for you. You must be curious to know who I am. I am Alexander the Great—the conquerer of the world," Alexander announced himself proudly.

The old sadhu looked at Alexander with a sharp glance, went closer, and put his hand on his shoulder. "So, you are the famous Alexander who conquers countries by robbing them of their happiness? Tell me, young man, how can a robber be both

a conqueror as well as a giver?"

Alexander did not know what to say as he had never before faced a situation like this.

The old sadhu continued: "Young man, if you really want to conquer the world, you must first win the hearts of the people. And you can win their hearts only by love, not by aggression. We are sadhus and we have renounced the world. We don't need anything. Well, if you want anything, we will try to get it for you. Now, tell me, what do you want?"

Alexander could not believe his ears. He had never before heard anyone talk like this. A feeling of guilt crept over him and he became sad suddenly. For a moment he did not know what to do. Then he saluted the old sadhu and went back to his camp.

That very night he proclaimed: "We will return to our country. I am no more interested in conquering the world."

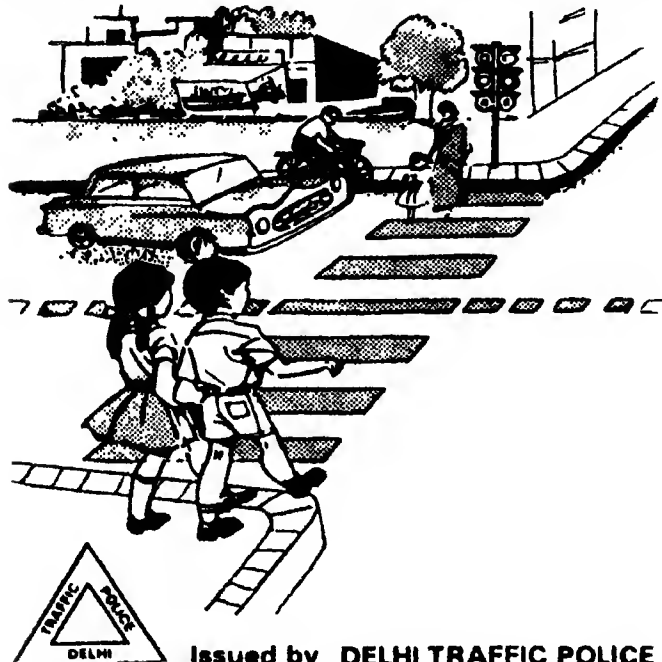
He went to King Puru and set him free before he began his march back to his country.

*Manorama Jafa*



# BEWARE MOTORISTS!

**ZEBRA CROSSING  
IS OUR RIGHT,  
OUR TERRITORY**



Issued by DELHI TRAFFIC POLICE

devp 78/247

# When Motor Cars Were 'Evil Machines'!

**Y**OU have been reading about auto-racing in these columns. You will be surprised to know that it is still a matter of debate as to who invented the first automobile. But the idea of the auto was described by Homer in the 'Illiad', Book XVIII.

Heard of Cugnot? He is believed to have built the first self-propelled road vehicle. During its second run, it ran into a wall. The first automobile in the world was, thus, responsible for the world's first ever automobile accident as well! Cugnot was also the first inventor-driver to be jailed. The charge against him: he made a lot of noise with his vehicle.

The 'Father of the Automobile', Nicolas Joseph Cugnot, a French artillery officer, and other pioneers like him worked under very difficult conditions. The motorists of today, who zip their cars at high speeds, would have regretted even owning a vehicle in the last century.

Cugnot invented, in 1769, an awkward-looking three-wheeler, which was powered by a steam engine. It was, in fact, a tractor for hauling heavy cannons. Its first run at 3 m.p.h. was successful. It was, during the second run, that it went for a 'handshake' with a wall...

The initial experiments by the pioneers frequently resulted in accidents. Many a hopeful inventor saw his work for years end in failure. Most of them had to stop their experiments for lack of financial backing. Farmers hated chicken-killing, horse-frightening women juggernauts. They were also resented by the coach operators. Motorists had to pay extra for the damage they supposedly did to roads!

Farmers formed anti-automobile leagues to combat the 'evil machine'. Automobile owners, too, organised their own clubs. They felt they were a 'downtrodden' minority and badly needed protection. They were not only afraid of farmers but also of the 'bikex cops'. These cops used to stop their vehicles and order them not to travel at

more than the stipulated speed. In Britain, the speed limit was 4 m.p.h.

Another reason why farmers hated automobiles was, these vehicles did not consume oats and hay! The car drivers often found their way by the feathers of chickens killed by the motorists preceding them.

Richard Trevithick, an Englishman, built a car in 1801. This was the first attempt to use mechanical power for moving a vehicle. It reached a speed of 9 m.p.h.—an almost unheard of speed in those days. After its first run, the machine burnt up, while the inventor and his friends were at a tavern celebrating its successful run.

In 1831, the British Parliament passed stringent laws regulating the use of automobiles. In 1865, it was laid down that one person, with a red flag in his hand, must walk in front of a motor vehicle. This 'Red Flag Act' was repealed after three decades when automobile production in Britain slackened. No one wanted to own a vehicle which required the services of another man to pilot it along the streets!

The early automobiles used to have a trunk-size tool box fitted on to a side. Every now and then, when a vehicle refused to budge, its occupants would come out and start repairing. They were jeered by the passers-by, who shouted, "Go and get a horse, man!"

These early engines roared and coughed, and scared horses and children alike. In New York State, the first Motor Vehicle legislation was passed in 1901. It required the operator of an automobile to pull his vehicle to the roadside and stop on a signal from the driver of a horse-drawn vehicle. The motorist could move only after the latter had passed on. If the horse became restive, its driver had the right to require the motorist to shut off the car engine!

One inventor, Uriah Smith, proposed to solve the problem of the horses getting frightened, by designing a car with a life-size horse's head mounted on the bonnet. This,

he claimed, would not frighten the horses, for they would think that another one was approaching!

An automobile driver, on a 100-mile journey, considered himself lucky if he managed with two spare tyres and tubes. Three or four flat tyres were the average, and eight to ten were not unheard of either.

Roads in those days were generally so muddy that the cars sometimes had to be pulled out by horses. One farmer specified in his will that his car should be buried along with him because it was fond of getting into holes! In 1906, a campaign was launched to ban the automobile from the road, because it was "dangerous to both the drivers inside and the pedestrians outside". All the same, the bouncing and jolting car, some people believed, was good for one's liver!

The first car made by Henry Ford was completed at 2 a.m. on the rainy morning of June 4, 1896. He was ready for a trial

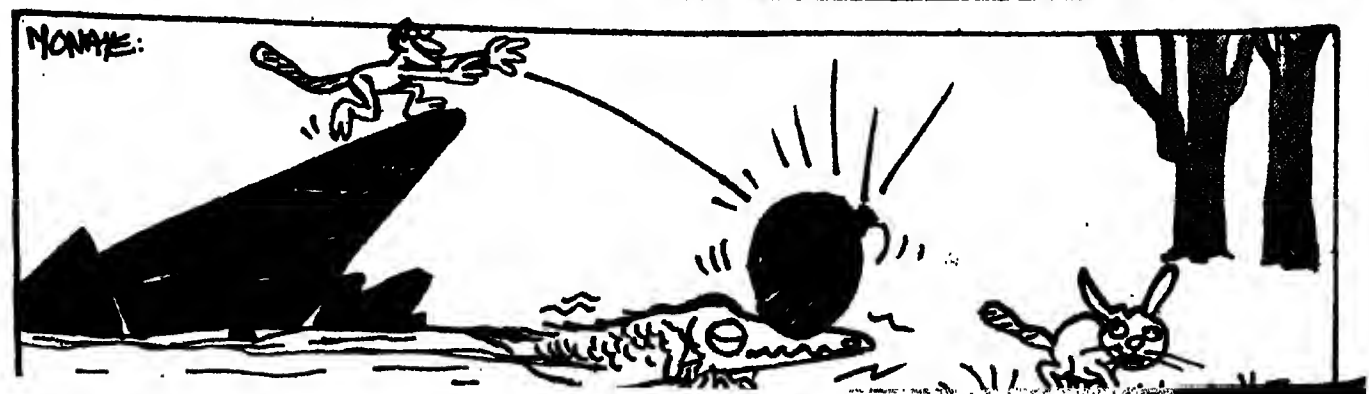
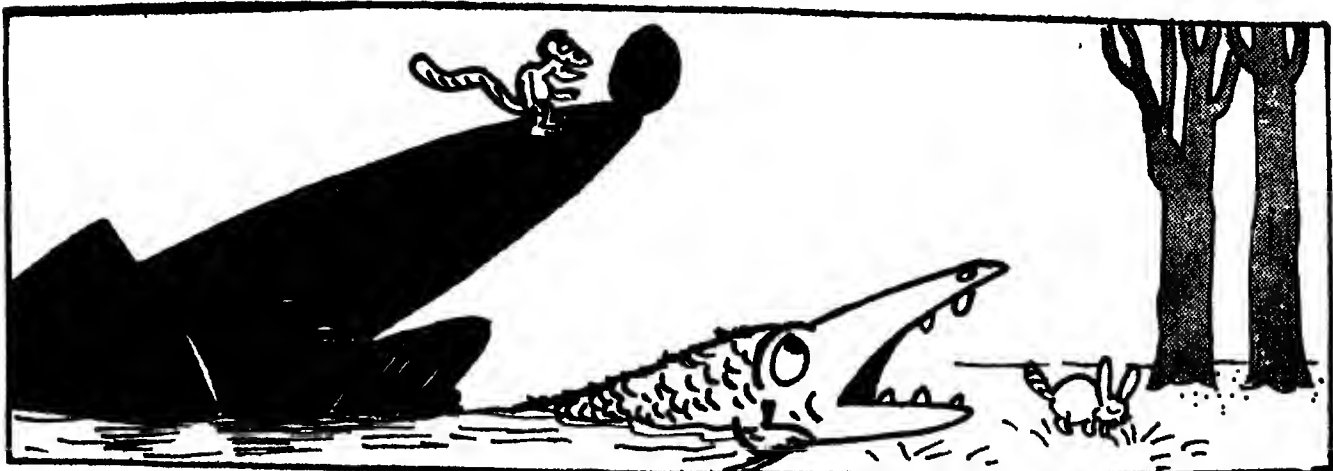
run—but to his dismay, he discovered he had overlooked one small detail. The car was wider than the shed door! However, this was quickly solved, by knocking out the brick work of the door with an axe.

The first drivers faced plenty of problems. In dry weather, clouds of dust would be stirred up by the vehicle and the driver would be completely bathed in dust. Men drivers, therefore, carried linen dusters, and women drivers put on veils. Quite often, on unpaved roads, the vehicles would get stuck in mud holes, while the occupants were washed by rain. With no windshield, no canvas top, these self-propelled buggies were miserable, whether they be in wind or in rain. The old-fashioned crank often kicked back in ingratitude.

Just imagine, these old cranks are today admired and caressed by thousands who throng to look at them at Vintage Car Rallies!

*Kailash C. Behl*

## ANIMAL WORLD



# KAPISH



ANANT PAI  
MOHANDAS

KAPISH IS LOOKING FOR HIS FRIEND, PINTU THE DEER.

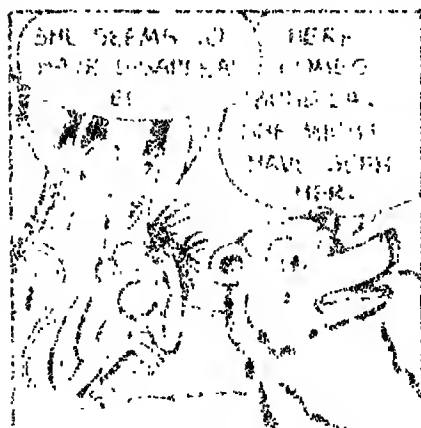


WONDER WHERE SHE HAS GONE.

SABOYCHA, HAVE YOU SEEN PINTU?

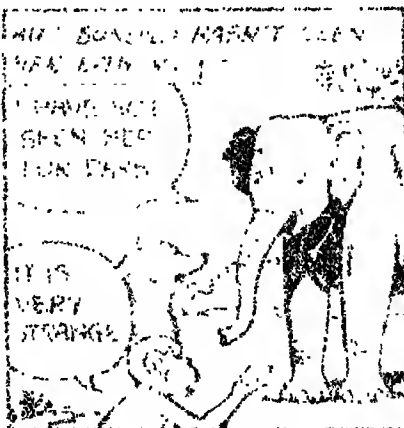


NO WHY?



SHE SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED.

HERE COMES ANANT PAI. HE MUST HAVE SEEN HER.



ALL BOARDS HAVEN'T BEEN HERE FOR A WHILE. I HAVE NOT SEEN HER FOR DAYS.

IT IS VERY STRANGE.



COME ON, LET'S TRY TO FIND HER.

NOBODY NOTICES THAT THE PAKAL, HUNTING IN THE BUSHES.



THESE ARE THE THREE FRIENDS ARE HERE.

KAPISH, LISTEN ATTENTIVELY.



PAKAL MAKES HIS APPEARANCE.

I HAVE YOUR FRIEND PINTU, HERE

WHAT?



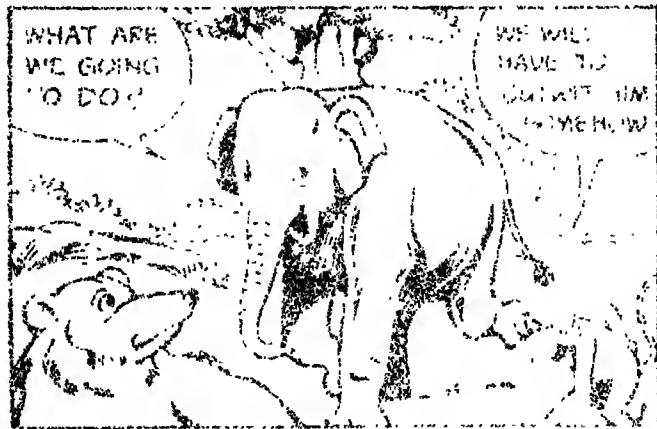
STAY WHERE YOU ARE. IF YOU COME CLOSER, I WILL JUMP ON HER NECK AND FINISH HER.

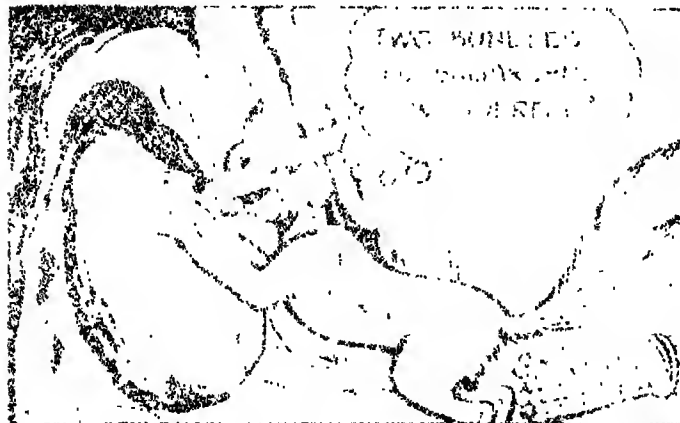
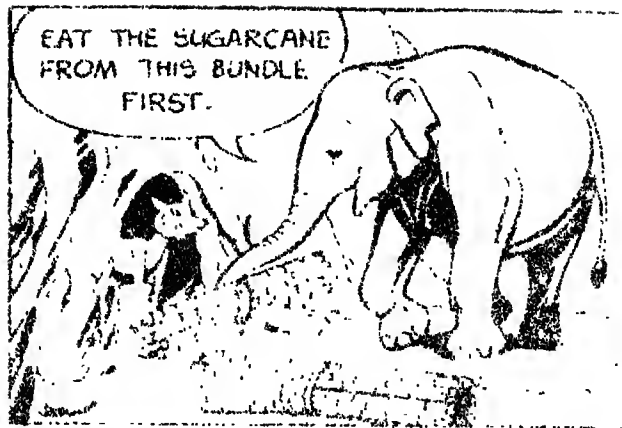
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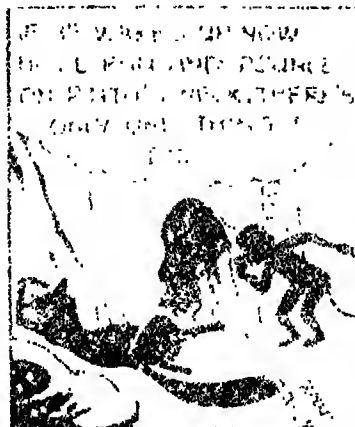
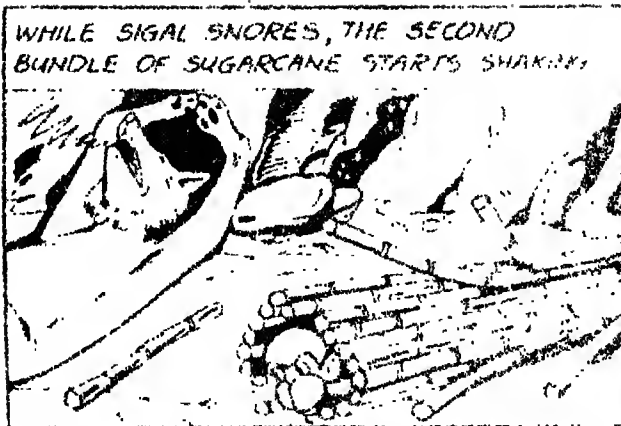
WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOU KASCAL?

I WILL SPARE HER LIFE FOR TWO FAT RABBITS.









# “Be our guest, Ravan!”

**M**Y twin-brats Rupin and Reuben were born on Dussera day. This year, in a moment of generosity, I asked them, “Rupin, Reuben, how would you like to have an open-air birthday party, with a Ravan effigy you can burn after the party is over?”

“She doesn’t mean it, yaar,” Rupin told Reuben. They exchanged one of their who’s she-trying-to-fool looks.

“All right,” I said. “This is the first and last offer. Hereafter the topic is closed.”

“We’ll have a ten-headed Ravan, Mom,” said Reuben solemnly.

“And Kumbhkaran, too,” piped in Rupin, “and I think it’s right to have Diwali eats for our party, too—like karanjis and chaklis and chivda and besan ladoos and, of course, a scrumptious chocolate cake.”

It’s difficult to stop Rupin once he starts on food, but I did interrupt. “Look here, kids, either you have a Ravan and a campfire party where all you eat is peanuts and popcorn, or you have a fancy chocolate cake party. Now choose.”

“I didn’t know you could be so horrid,” Reuben said, while Rupin protested by beating a thali with a spoon and shouting. “Mummy hai, hail!”

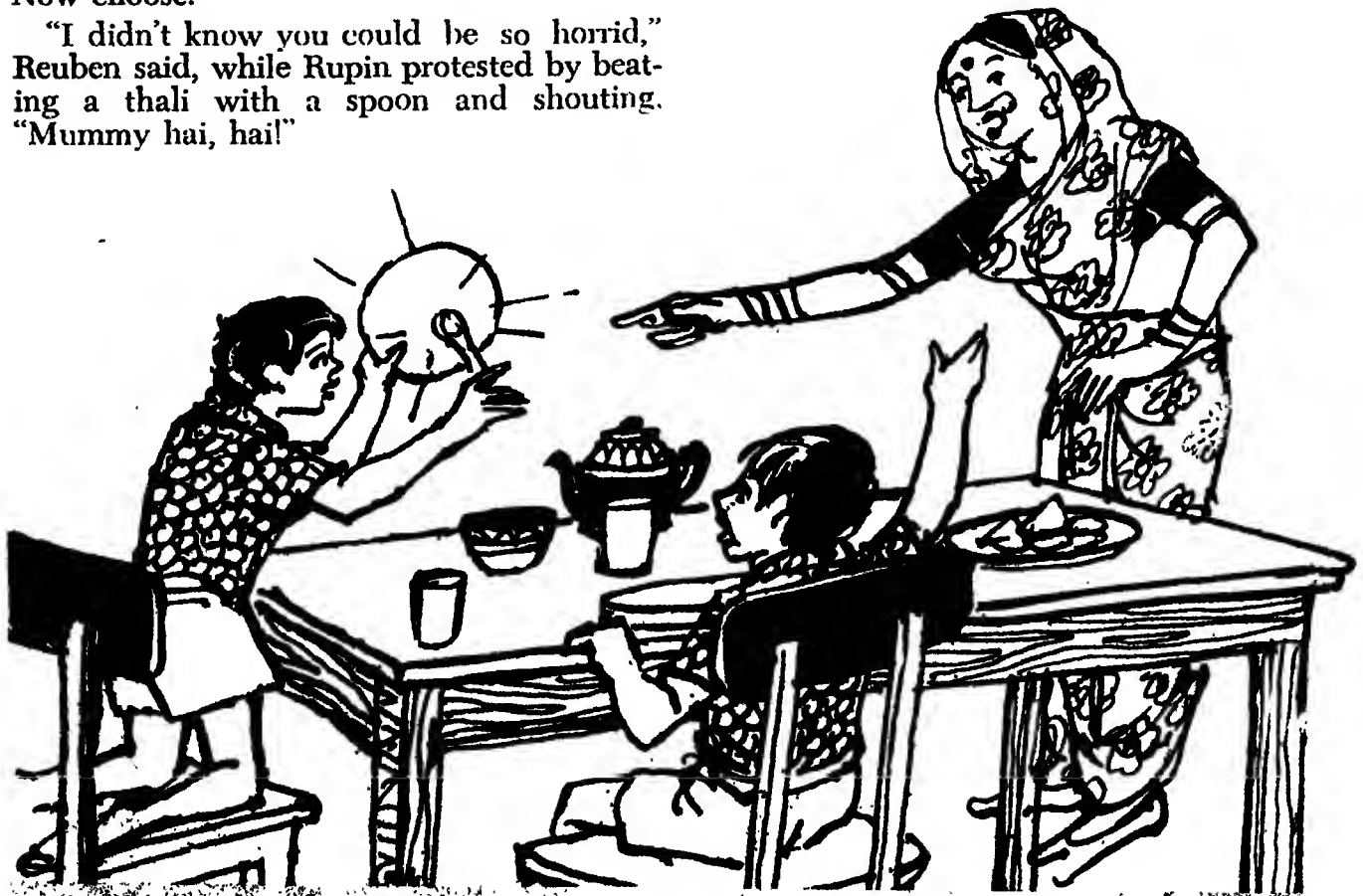
“Stop that racket, immediately, you two,” I shouted above the din. “You don’t actually expect me to give a party without proper eats, do you?”

Rupin suddenly changed his chant to “Long live Mom” and Reuben joined in.

Alas, only I know how I paid for my folly. My twins’ tenth birthday was adding ten years to my age! They decided they would make the effigy of Ravan (thank God they forgot Kumbhkaran) along with their father. They returned from the market carrying cane baskets of all shapes and sizes, coloured paper, sequined paper, a crateful of crackers, sparklers and ‘anars’.

“What are the baskets for?” I asked surprised.

“For Ravan’s head and body,” replied Reuben in a superior tone. Ever since I had suggested this party, the twins and their pop had ganged up together. My place, they told me very kindly, was in the kitchen. “Come on, Mom,” they would say, “get to work.”



We'll need all of three thousand karanjis, the same amount of chaklis, and about ten kilos of chivda. Of course, we'll help you now and then."

I wish they actually had left me alone. Well, I survived the preparations. But would I survive the party for which twenty boisterous boys were coming? I began doubting it when I saw the Ravan effigy the twins had made. Mercifully he wasn't very tall. But he had all of ten heads. The face was actually a vegetable-seller's basket carefully pasted over with blue paper. The eyes were red, lips green, and he had silver streaks for cheeks. His hairy moustache reached down to what could be his knees. On closer examination, the hairy 'moosh' turned out to be the hair-piece I use to stuff my bun. The other nine heads were small 'matkas' painted in the most hideous colours you can think of.

Noticing my suspicious scrutiny of Ravan's spare parts, Reuben made haste to tell me, "He's full of crackers and 'anars'. Mom. He'll go up beautifully."

"All right," I said. I noticed I was saying all right a good deal these days, and praying to God a good deal more.

Everything was ready. The invitations, hand-painted by the twins with a Ravan design, had gone out well in advance. The chivda, chaklis, and karanjis were stocked in tins and padlocked. Part of my prayers were devoted to a passage: "I hope, O god, Rupin and Reuben don't empty the tins before the party." Because the only fresh snacks that I was serving were 'aalu bondas' and tomato sandwiches. Of course, the inevitable chocolate cake would be there.

Early on Dussera day, I woke the twins to give them an oil bath. I scrubbed them clean despite their protests.

"Here, Rupin, Reuben, this is the outfit you'll wear for the party," I said handing them a box each. They opened the boxes and screamed, "Churidars and kurtas with jackets? Are you crazy, Mom?"

"If you want a Ravan party, you'll jolly well dress for it," I said.

I had decided to have only the cake-cutting ceremony out in the open where Ravan had been installed. It would be too tiresome

for me to carry all the plates in and out. When all of Rupin and Reuben's friends had collected, I decided it was time to cut the cake. The cake was on the table bang opposite Ravan. But there was no sign of Rupin or Reuben.

"Roo-pin!" I called. "Reuben! Come on, it's time to cut the cake." Only an ominous silence greeted me. None of their friends knew where the scamps had disappeared. I wiped my brow. What were these two upto, I wondered. I didn't have to wonder long.

Three figures came racing down the grass, behind the Ravan effigy. It was fairly dark now and their figures were lit up by the flaming torches they carried in their hands. All three were dressed in feathers and Red Indian dresses. Those two were my brats . . . but who was the third, tall one? Well, well, who else could it be but my next door neighbour Mr. Olgadares! An American official, he came to India last year. He had brought those identical Red Indian suits for the twins when he went to the U.S.A. this summer. But what on earth were they upto?

"WHOOPEEE! WHOOP! WHOOP!" they cried as they skipped madly round the effigy, brandishing the lighted torches.

"Not now, Rupin, not now," I screamed, realising their intentions. "Reub, stop Mr. Olgadares, not now, please."

But who had ears for poor me? All the kids had by now moved closer to the action. Mr. Olgadares raised his burning torch high above his head and shouted, "Now, boys!" With one joyous cry both Rupin and Reuben thrust their flaming torches into the beautiful Ravan before my horrified eyes. Mr. Olgadares then touched his torch to Ravan's nose, and all the boys clapped in glee. Even my husband seemed to be thrilled with the spectacle. So I decided to enjoy the show, though I had planned that burning the effigy would mark the end of the party, not the beginning.

"PFFT, PFFFFT, BANG, WHOOSH" went the crackers inside the effigy. The anars lit up, and suddenly the proud, fierce Ravan came crashing. . . . Everybody ran helter-skelter. I turned to look where he would fall. "Oh, no," I sobbed. "Oh, no," as I saw Mr. Ravan come splat face down into the "scrumptious chocolate cake".



"Yaay", I could hear Mr. Olgadares shouting. "For he's a jolly good fellow," he began to sing. My husband ran to rescue the table and the squashed cake. The kids seemed to think this to be even greater fun. They all ran to the smouldering Ravan and tried to grab little charred pieces of the cake. Rupin and Reuben did the same. I couldn't stand it anymore. I ran straight into the house, to get away from the smell of sweet burning chocolate. The kids trooped in soon enough led by my husband and Mr. Olgadares, all singing "He's a jolly good fellow!"

They did not need me to tell them to tuck in. They fell upon the food and attacked it with gusto. As he left, each little friend of Rupin and Reuben came up to me. "Terrific party, Aunty. Thank you so much. We had a grand time."

Mr. Olgadares also came up to me. "Chin up, old girl," he said. "It was a jolly good show. The war dance was a bit unexpected for you, eh?" he said sympathetically and winked at my husband, who just winked right back.

"So it was pre-planned?" I started accusing them—when two figures scurried up to me and shouted, "She's a jolly good fella. Thanks, Mom, for the grandest of all parties!" And blinking my tears, I went into the 'puja' room and told the family deity. "Thank



you, God, for blessing me with both my sons on the same day. What would I have done if one had been born on Dussera and the other on Holi?"

*Vaijayanti Savant*

# That Sunday Morning

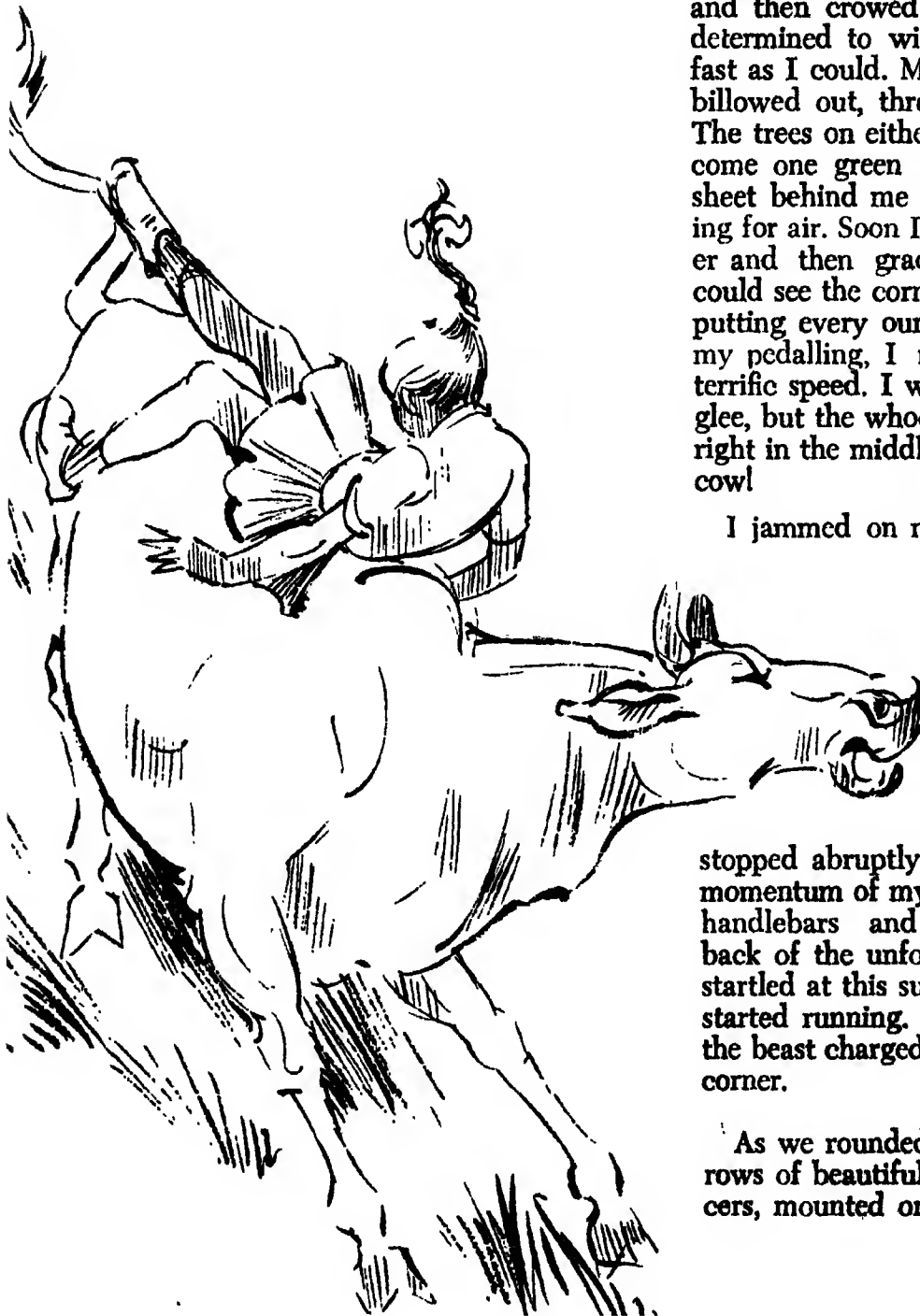
**M**Y FATHER had just got posted to Patna. The first Sunday, my brother and I decided to do a little exploring on our bikes. It still being very early in the morning, we could see only a few people. The roads were good, and the trees lining them gave a lot of shade; but the scene was monotonous. There were no imposing buildings or monuments like there were in Delhi, from

where we had just come. After cycling for about half-an-hour, my brother got bored and said, "Come on, I'll race you to that far corner. The loser treats the other to a chocolate, okay?"

'Okay. One, two, three!' I said, and then we were off.

This was not the first time we had raced, only invariably my brother had beaten me and then crowed over me for days. I was determined to win this time. I pedalled as fast as I could. My legs ached and my skirt billowed out, threatening to hit my face. The trees on either side of the road had become one green blurr. My hair blew in a sheet behind me and my lungs were bursting for air. Soon I drew level with my brother and then gradually I moved ahead. I could see the corner just in front of me, and putting every ounce of strength I had into my pedalling, I rounded the corner at a terrific speed. I was starting to whoop with glee, but the whoop froze on my lips. There, right in the middle of the road, stood a lone cow!

I jammed on my brakes, and the cycle



stopped abruptly, but I could not stop the momentum of my own body. I flew over the handlebars and landed smack on the back of the unfortunate animal. The cow, startled at this sudden attack, reared up and started running. I clung on for dear life, as the beast charged up the road and round the corner.

As we rounded the corner, I spotted two rows of beautifully resplendent Cavalry officers, mounted on their magnificent horses

coming towards us. They obviously belonged to the governor's bodyguards. I could only cling on helplessly as the frightened cow charged straight at the horses. The horses panicked and scattered. There started a regular stampede. The cow managed to fall into a ditch and in the process, dislodged me, and I landed on the soft earth bordering the ditch. I sat up with a groan and saw that the Cavalry horses were still out of control. Some of them were running like mad, in circles, while their riders tried to bring them under control. Two horses were nowhere to be seen, and one horse threw its rider right in front of my eyes. The poor man landed in the ditch just next to the cow. The cow, thinking this was another attack, bellowed loudly and, lowering its head, charged at the unfortunate man. The poor fellow scrambled out of the ditch, tearing his pants at rather a wrong place in his haste to get out. Realising this, he sat down with a bump on the road and would not get up.

I saw my brother with my bike coming up to me with a grin on his face and I felt like hitting him.

"You looked such a sight on top of that cow," he said and started laughing. Then he probably realised that I might have been injured and asked, "Are you all right?"

"Of course, I am," I said haughtily and got up at once. Nothing on earth would have made me admit to him how frightened and shaken I was.

Just then my brother spotted one of the riders of the horses coming towards us with a thunderous scowl on his face. Just behind him was the man to whom in all probability the cow belonged. My brother gave them an uneasy glance and said, "I think it would be prudent if we made a quick move from here." I looked round and saw that if both of us did not make a move fast enough, we would be in for a lot of explanations. With one accord we both got onto our bikes and beat a hasty retreat.

The morning had already been rather eventful and we did not want to add another unpleasant episode to it.

*Savita Singh*

*(Courtesy : Writers Workshop)*

## Edison's 100 Days of Schooling

**T**HOMAS ALVA EDISON was just 7 years old (See CHILDREN'S WORLD, April 1978), in 1854 when the Edison family moved from Milan, in Ohio State, to Port Huron, a small town in Michigan State, about 50 miles north-east of Detroit. They settled in a new two-storey house Mr. Edison had bought for his family. Mrs. Edison then decided it was time Al learnt to read and write and figure (rithmetic), or the three R's as we say.

One morning, Mr. Edison drove Al in his buggy to the nearest school. It had only one room. Nearly 40 pupils, ranging in age from 7 to 20 attended it. Eight different grades met in that one room, and they were all taught by the same teacher. He was an over-worked and not a very patient man.

The younger and the duller children sat on the benches in the front rows, where the teacher could keep an eye on them. The older and the brighter ones sat at the far end of the room. While one grade recited, all the other boys and girls studied or worked out problems.

Al found the school uninteresting. He had only a primer and a spelling book, which served both as a speller and a simple reader. He soon was tired of the words he had to spell. He knew by heart all the simple stories.

But his books did not give him the answers to the important questions that, every now and then, bubbled up in his restive brain. His primer told him that 'A' stands for apple. Al soon learnt that. But why are some apples red and some green? Why does



an apple pack its seeds in the little pockets in the core? His primer answered none of these 'important' questions.

Used to outdoor activity, he found it boring to sit still, for long hours during which all the other pupils recited their lessons.

Even as a little boy, he had been an eternal question-box! For instance, he wanted to know why water runs downhill, why snow falls only during winter, and what gives a rainbow its beautiful colours. At home, Al's questions earned him the nickname 'Why'! Though his relatives smiled at his questions, they always tried to answer them. Sometimes they had to confess that they did not know the answers he wanted. Sometimes they would tell him to wait until he could read and find the answers himself.

Al's teacher never answered his questions. Instead, that impatient man would scold Al for asking questions and order him back to his books. Sometimes the teacher would exclaim, "Don't be impertinent, young man," or, "If you think you know more than I do, come up here and teach the class, Mr. Wiseacre!" The other pupils would then laugh and make Al look foolish.

One day, in 1855, after three months of attending the school, Al came home and went into the kitchen where his mother had just begun to cook supper.

"Mother, what does the word **addled** mean?" he demanded.

"Addled means mixed up or spoiled, son," replied Mrs. Edison.

"I'm not mixed up!" he declared indignantly.

"Of course, you're not," assured his mother. "But what makes you say such curious things?"

"The teacher is always saying I'm addled. Today, the inspector came to our school and the teacher told him I was addled! The inspector laughed and said, 'Perhaps there's nothing in his cranium!' What's cranium, mother?"

A few skilful questions convinced his mother that Al was not happy at the school.

At breakfast next morning, she turned to Al and said, "Son, before I married your father, I was teaching in the high school in Vienna in Canada. I think I'd enjoy teaching again. How would you like studying at home and having me for your teacher?"

Al looked up. There was a bright light in his eyes. "Could I ask questions about all the things I want to know?"

His mother laughed. "A good teacher wants her pupils to ask questions. We can take turns asking each other about the things we want to know."

"Then I'd like you for my teacher," said Al.

From that morning Alva Edison never attended any formal school. For nearly six years, his mother taught him at home. Often, when Al was at play, Mrs. Edison would come to the door and call in her clear beautiful voice, "Al! Al! It's time for lessons, son." No matter what he was doing, Al would go in at once and study with his mother. Under her instruction Al soon learnt to read well.

Then his father took up educating the boy. He offered his little son twenty-five cents for every good book he would read and then make a good oral report on it.

Al learnt to make clear, accurate reports on all his readings. At the same time, he earned the pocket-money which he needed very much. Together, his mother and father helped him to get a splendid education, though during his entire life Al attended school for less than a hundred days!

*A.P. Som*

## MY DOLL

I have a little doll  
A very pretty doll,  
Her name is Laura  
Oh, sure she has an aura,  
She sings a song  
That begins ping-pong  
And ends with a bong!

*Anusha Charl (9)*



# MAROONED OFF A METEOROID

**I**N the sunlight of Epsilon Eridani, the shadow of the mountain was sharp and jet black. To the explorers, who were at the boundary of the shadow, the yellowish mountain appeared towering. It gave them a feeling of awe, yet they continued to walk in that virgin darkness, in the direction of the signal.

The strength of the signal was gradually rising, and the explorers could only wonder what its source was, as they approached it. They had, of course, sensed the presence of life, and that is why they were there, enthusiastic but cautious.

The wreckage of a spacecraft lay there among a debris of rocks. Its metallic lustre was still aglow, and fortuitously the door-hatch was clearly in sight. It did not require them much effort to squeeze into the craft and rescue the living being whose signal had called them there. The being was, as they had expected, of the lowermost order in their evolutionary scale but of the same genus. Though dying, it was right then alive. This was important, for from it they could know something about the prehistoric times, when their own species had evolved on their home solar system around the star 'Sun'.

After the explorers had revived the being, by giving him an energy dose they had with them, what it till then had cried in whispers was heard in a loud nasal tone.

"It's an emergency! Emergency! *Armstrong-IV* calling. It's an emergency!..." The being repeated the frantic call, just like a tape-recorder.

"Look here," said one of the explorers curtly, "we have come to your rescue, then why this crying?"

"So you've have come? I was told aeons ago that you would certainly come. Thank you so much, indeed, my rescuers!" The voice of the being suddenly became calm and calculated. The explorers blinked at each other, amused.

"We don't want to know who had told

you of our coming," said one of the explorers." We, however, would want to know how you reached this star system of Epsilon Eridani, which is serveral billions of kilometres away from the Sun. And by the way, when did you come?"

Such inquisitiveness shown towards a being who, a minute ago, was fighting between life and death, would have been called inhuman in the past. For these explorers, however, it had no significance. The word 'human' was not even in their vocabulary. They had no feeling and thus could have no sympathy towards anyone. They knew their duties, and their only aim then was to get as much out of the being as they could.

"Well, I don't have much idea," replied the being, a nostalgic note creeping into his voice. "I only remember we were floating through space when it happened—I mean the collision. As my function on this spacecraft was only to meet the demands of my captain, I don't know much. Had my colleagues in the various controlling units of the spacecraft been alive today, they would have certainly told you what you want to know. I can, however, only tell you that this spacecraft you're in is *Armstrong-IV* of the Lunar Base *Archimedes*. The mission is called *Jules Verne*..... Ouch! Yes!..." The voice of the being paused as if it had suddenly remembered something important, and then continued.

"By Jove, I had completely forgotten that. Yes, yes, my dear rescuers, I have with me one record which might shed some light on the mission of this spacecraft. I now remember: when my captain was about to die, he handed it over to me, telling me to preserve it at all costs. He had said that it was of historical importance..."

What could be of historical importance? the explorers wondered.

*Dilip M. Salwi*

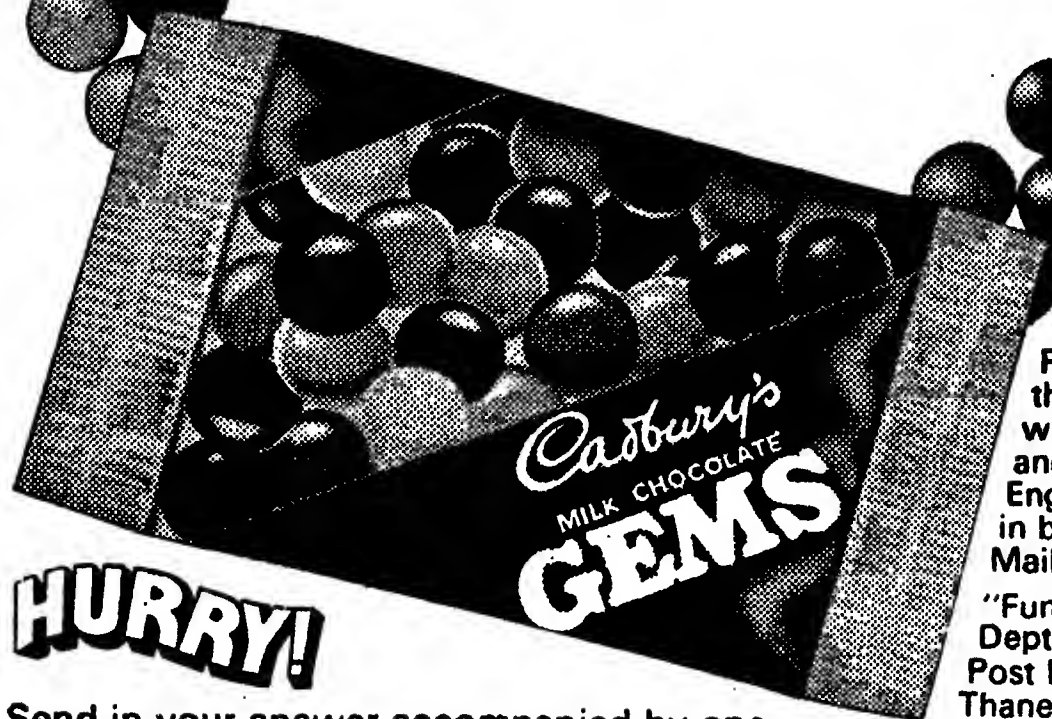
*(To be continued)*

# FUN WITH GEMS

## 1001 LUCKY PRIZES TO BE WON

What is the missing number?

5	7
?	16
8	20
14	10



### HURRY!

Send in your answer accompanied by one empty large (30 g.) plastic packet of Cadbury's Gems. The first 1001 successful entrants will each get a State Bank Gift Cheque for Rs. 11

Please write the answer, as well as your name and address, in English only, and in block letters. Mail entries to:

"Fun with Gems",  
Dept. D.24  
Post Box No. 56,  
Thane 400 601,  
Maharashtra.

Last date for receiving entries:  
17th November, 1978

## Colourful Chocolate Centred Cadbury's GEMS

CHAITRA-C 193



**M**EETHA had a rather lucky week. His favourite auntie Neeru, during her one day stay, took him out to the zoo. There she let Meetha feed the chimp. She bought for him ice-cream cones everytime he muttered, "Auntie, isn't it hot?" and followed up the information by wiping his face and taking a deep breath. The visit to the zoo over, Auntie Neeru and Meetha took a detour via the shopping centre. At a toy shop, Meetha was bought a tiger whose eyes lighted up red and a roar came out of his throat.

"You must read a lot, Meetha," Auntie Neeru said. And she bought for him, 'Wonders Of The World'. Meetha was attracted by the cover of another book. It showed a witch with long teeth and nails lapping up a pretty princess and her little brother.

"Could I have this book too, please!" he said. The book was promptly handed over to Meetha.

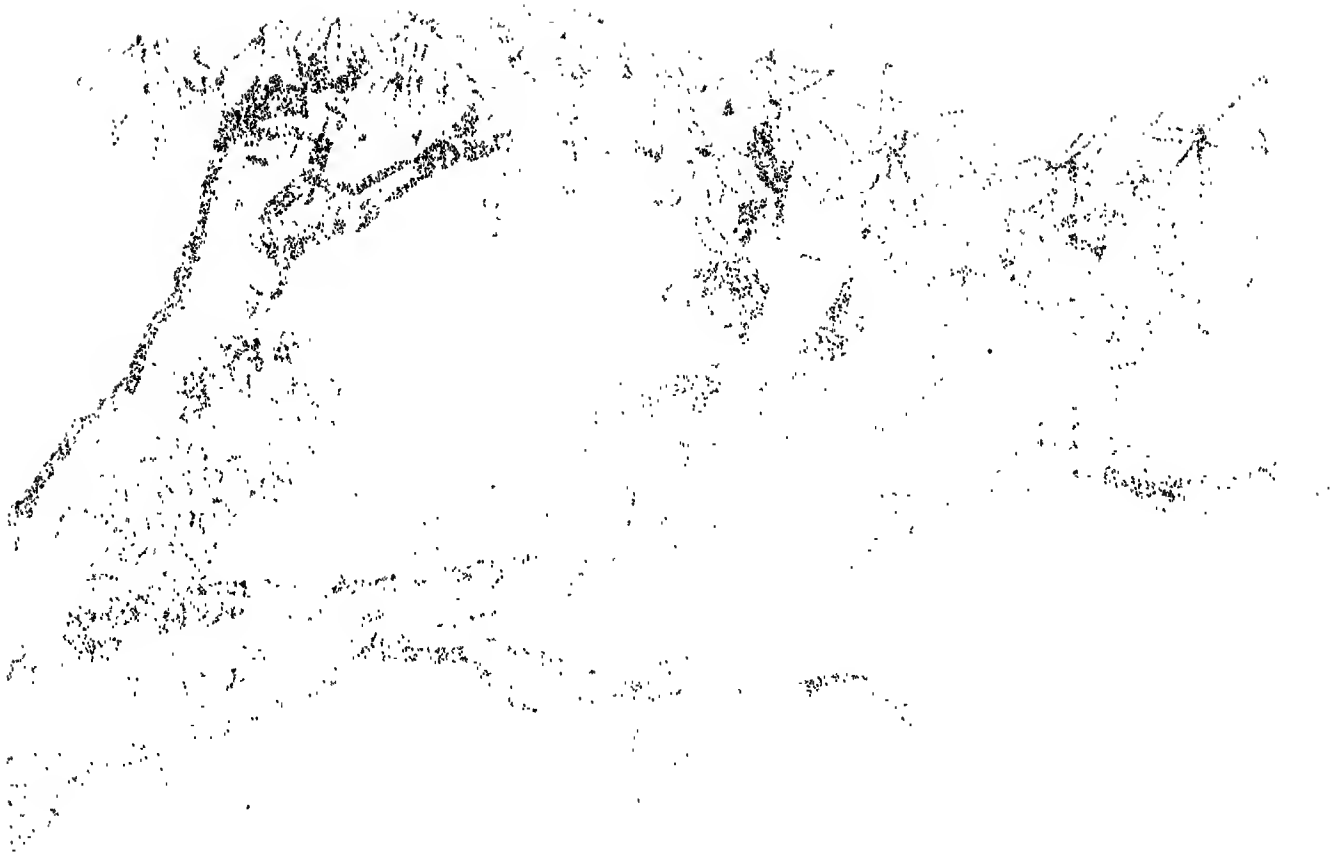
## **PAPER TIGERS**

Chintu was called urgently to inspect the gifts. He was fascinated by the tiger and the witch's story book. The two friends made the tiger roar the whole morning and practised to produce a similar sound. By lunch time, Meetha and Chintu could copy the toy's roar beautifully. But, the toy had stopped roaring.

"Imagine Auntie Neeru paid twenty rupees for it," a very angry Meetha said. "And it's gone 'phut' the very first day."

Chintu offered to repair the toy. Its head was unscrewed, then the tail was pulled out. But, the four legs could be extracted only after Meetha and Chintu joined their strength. From the body of the tiger, Chintu took out a metallic box which contained a tiny battery, a spring, a bulb and a drum sort of thing. The spring uncoiled the moment it was taken out of the box.

"Look, this is what's wrong," Chintu held



up the spring triumphantly.

"What will you do now?" Meetha enquired.

"I will straighten it up," Chintu said. He tried his best to stretch it. The result was that the spring broke into two. Meetha lost his temper. "What have you done? Broken it!"

"I tried to repair. . . ." Chintu stammered. "But it was so bad that it broke."

A fight would have followed but for the arrival of Meetha's mother.

"Look. What have I brought for you two?" she said and produced roasted 'bhuttas'. Bhutta was their favourite snack. With one bound they jumped off the bed and took the bhuttas from Meetha's mother.

"Hey! Let's go to the back garden," Chintu suggested. He was anxious to get away from the broken spring and the tiger who could roar no longer.

"Let's do that," agreed Meetha. "We will read the witch's story while we eat."

The two friends ran to their favourite tree in the back garden. They comfortably perched themselves on a low branch and started reading. Suddenly, Chintu roared like the

toy tiger. "Don't do that again," Meetha was shaken. "You shocked me. I might have fallen and hurt myself."

"I am practising," Chintu replied. "You do that too. If suppose the witch tries to catch us, we can roar like a tiger and drive her away."

"Suppose she doesn't?" Meetha did not like idea of a witch running after him.

"Let's read further," Chintu said. He was not very sure what he would do if the witch ignored the tiger's roar.

"Hey! It's a mango tree from which she comes down," Meetha exclaimed while reading.

"We are sitting on a mango tree," Chintu said very quietly. The two quickly looked up the tree.

"I think mother must be searching for me. I will go now." Chintu climbed down to the ground.

"I'll come along with you." Meetha did not like the idea of being left alone near the tree.

"Then we can finish the story in my bedroom." Chintu always felt safe in the bed, with his parents in the next room.

The story was interesting. The witch's hobby was kidnapping children. She took them to her castle. There she would not give them toys or sweets, but made them look after her flying horses and fire-eating dragons. It was only when a magician arrived and turned the witch into a statue that the children were set free. But on dark nights, the witch used to come alive and try to catch children going past her. 'Don't go near her statue, children, the book concluded. Chintu repeated the last line in the book. "Hey!" he shouted, "It's evening. Let's go down and watch television."

The two ran to the drawing room, imitating the roar of the toy tiger, Chintu's parents and sister were already there. "The two tigers arrive," laughed Chintu's father.

It was during the TV newscast that Meetha whispered to his friend. "It's eight. I am hungry. Let's go to my place." On a nod from Chintu, Meetha announced generally. "I am taking Chintu over to my house."

They reached the verandah. The garden was in darkness. Crickets and frogs were making their usual sounds after a slight drizzle. Meetha stepped down the verandah, when Chintu said, "Hey, we have a statue in our garden. Have you noticed it, Meetha?"

Meetha quickly climbed back to the verandah. He caught hold of Chintu's hand. "Oh, yes! Can you see it." The two tried to see it from where they stood.

"I can't," Chintu said. "Neither can I," Meetha's voice was weak.

"Do you think it's....?" Chintu didn't speak further.

"Could be," Meetha said with a weaker voice.

"And tried to catch children," Chintu added. The two ran back to the safety of the drawing room.

"I thought you were going to Meetha's place," Chintu's father said.

"Yes, Papa. But, I have invited Meetha to eat with us," Chintu said.

"Then go over and tell Meetha's mother that he will be eating here."

"It's alright, uncle. Mother would know." Meetha helped his friend find an excuse.

"Are you two alright?" remarked Chintu's sister. "Your faces look white."

"It's very cold outside," Meetha and Chintu replied together.

"Cold! In September. Are you two well? I hope you haven't got fever." Chintu's mother came over and put her hands on their foreheads. "You both are cold."

"I told you it's cold outside," Chintu said.

"And the statue in the garden has disappeared." Meetha couldn't restrain himself.

"It's come alive," Chintu pointed out.

"What?" exclaimed everyone.

"Something's wrong with you two." Chintu's father turned from the TV to have a good look at them.

"It's true, uncle," Meetha said. "The statue is no longer there."

"What's this book?" said Chintu's mother. "Let me see." Chintu's mother, in the process of snatching, had noticed the witch on the cover. She read a few pages. Chintu's sister too came over to read it.

"The two have read a horror story and are afraid to go, Papa." Chintu's sister laughed uproariously. "It says in darkness the witch's statue used to come alive. Poor babes. Little coward babes," she sneered.

"Who says we are afraid? Are we, Meetha?" Chintu was angry.

"No, not us," Meetha protested.

"We are tigers," asserted Chintu. The two roared loudly to prove they were real tigers.

"Go out and roar in the verandah, you paper tigers," sneered his sister.

"We can," said Meetha. "We will."

The two ran to the verandah. They tried to produce the roar. But, it was not the same as in the drawing room. The darkness and the frogs' croaking reminded them too much of the story.

"Let me accompany you. I have to talk something to Meetha's mother." Chintu's mother joined them in the verandah.

"Yes, mama. You must come with us," said Chintu. His courage rose with her presence. The two roared in unison to prove that they were tigers.

"Aren't we real tigers?" asked Meetha rather anxiously.

"Yes, my dears, you are." Chintu's mother patted their hands to reassure them.

Vijay Dutt

# Sorcar's

## "Indrajal"

**S**ORCAR, the greatest magician of independent India and one of the greatest the world has ever known, died in Japan on January 6, 1971. He was on his eleventh trip to Japan, with his big magic show 'INDRAJAL', at the time perhaps the biggest on earth. The reception he got was tremendous, for Sorcar was the most beloved magician of the magic-fond people of Japan.

It was extremely cold in Japan then, and Sorcar himself was not in the best of health. The strain and the cold, I think, must have proved fatal to him.

His eldest son, Prafulla Chandra, brought the body home on January 9, in a specially chartered plane.

On the morning of January 10, the mortal remains of the magician were cremated near the famous Kalighat temple in Calcutta, in the presence of a throng of professional and amateur magicians. Even as the body turned into ashes, many of those present were given to wonder whether all this was not just another unique publicity stunt of the great magician! Some even doubted if the body that was cremated as Sorcar's was really the magician's and said, "It is not at all unlikely some day Sorcar will suddenly make his reappearance and smilingly exclaim: 'Here I am'. Nothing is impossible for Sorcar."

The reference was to one of the sensational items in Sorcar's repertoire. Standing in the middle of the stage, Sorcar would wrap himself up completely in a big white sheet of cloth and start dancing under cover of the sheet. Then, all of a sudden, the sheet would collapse on the stage, and the very next moment Sorcar would be shouting from near the balcony or the box seats upstairs: "Here I am!" The trick was very simple, but



the effect, when Sorcar presented it, was highly dramatic.

A similar item, presented by Sorcar on the TV in U.S.A., was described by editor William W. Larsen (Jr) in the January 1967 issue of his magazine, GENII.

'Complete in Indian costume, Sorcar first presented the Hangman illusion with a patter line having to do with a magician's assistant committing a crime and being sentenced to death on the gallows. He was marked, put on the gallows which is well above the floor, and a cloth bag placed over him. The magician came to his rescue, causing the assistant to vanish from the gallows and appear in the audience! Gasps from the audience were heard from coast to coast.'

Editor Larsen continues: 'Then Sorcar invited spectators to blindfold him and write various numbers, words, and designs on the blackboard. In spite of the blindfold, which had several thick layers and was covered



with a hood, Sorcar was able to repeat everything on the blackboard and get in some humorous asides at the same time. His closing feature was the famous Buzz-saw illusion, which he plays for all its dramatic effect. Sorcar is truly one of the all-time great illusionists.'

The blindfold item was called 'The X-Ray Eyes' in Sorcar's card of events. The Buzz-saw illusion was billed as 'Sawing a Woman in Half'. In this spine-chilling illusion, Sorcar first hypnotized his young lady assistant and then had her laid down on a table. In full view of the audience, the lady, now in hypnotized sleep, was cut into two by an electrically driven (and buzzing) circular saw, visibly passing right through her waist. Before cutting the lady (of course apparently) with the circular saw-blade, he very effectively demonstrated the genuineness and sharpness of the power-driven saw by pressing a piece of wood on the rapidly revolving saw-blade. With a tell-tale sound, the wood was cut into two in a flash. Naturally, many of the onlookers shuddered to think what would happen when the same revolving blade passed through the young lady's waist. All held their breath when the blade passed through her, and they sighed in great relief when magician Sorcar made her one whole again and de-hypnotized her, and she stood up and took leave of the audience with a graceful bow. About Sorcar's presentation of this illusion, Will Dexter, an English magician, wrote:

'Sorcar, the Indian illusionist, performed it with such zest when he brought his show to London that the audience really thought he had sawn the girl in half.'

This refers to Sorcar's visit to London in 1956.

P.C. (Pratual Chandra) Sorcar was born in 1913 (the year poet Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize in Literature) in the Mymensingh district of East Bengal (now Bangladesh), in a not very well-to-do family. His father's name was Bhagaban Chandra. 'Bhagaban' means God. "I worshipped my father as God," Sorcar told me once. "I was very sad to see him suffer hardships for want of money, and I took a vow that I will earn big money."

At school he was a very good student, loved by all the teachers. As a boy, he was fascinated by the magic shows of the great magician Ganapati Chakaraborti, who had become a legend in his life-time and was widely acknowledged as the 'Jadu Samrat' (Emperor of Magicians). Ganapati was a master of sleight-of-hand tricks, but he was mainly famous for what may be called 'escape' items like the 'Illusion Box', 'Illusion Tree', and 'Kangsla Karagar' (The Prison of King Kangsla). I shall tell you about them in the next issue.

Sorcar, a school student then, first witnessed Ganapati's show when he visited Mymensingh with his troupe. That decided his career finally. 'I must become a great magician like Ganapati, earn big money, and become a legend in my life-time,' Sorcar solemnly resolved. He met Ganapati and received his blessings and some initial guidance. That was enough to put him on the way. Ganapati was earning big money and fame from his tours all over India. He died in November 1939. After him, it was Sorcar's turn to earn bigger money and worldwide fame with a bigger repertoire which he called 'Indrajal'.

Sorcar specialized in big magic because he realized small tricks would not be effective in large halls and among big audiences. However, he genuinely loved small magic, with which he had begun his magic career. This grandmaster of big-scale stage magic never said "No" when, off stage, he was asked to "show a trick or two". He loved to do the small tricks he used to perform even during his school days, and he did them beautifully, proving that in magic it is not the trick but the way you do it that matters. Ordinary tricks became extraordinary in his hands. Those who have been dazzled only by the grandeur of Sorcar's stage illusions have no idea how wonderful and lovable he could be with his small tricks\* at close quarters, or 'close-up magic' as it is called.

Ajit Krishna Basu

(\* Watch for "The Flying Button" and "The Flying Coin"—two of Sorcar's original tricks, in the next instalment.)





# DRUMPY UMPY

ONCE upon a time, there was a dragon called Drumpy Umpy. Now, most dragons as you know are huge and dark and scaly and breathe FIRE. But, Drumpy Umpy was different. He was a modern day dragon.

He wasn't as large as an oldtime dragon, he wasn't sixty feet, but six. He wasn't a fat old dragon, he was a slim young fellow. He didn't have dark green scales; they were very pretty pink scales, with splotches of yellow. He was a most unusual dragon. And he knew it.

Drumpy Umpy lived with his family in a cave in the tallest mountain in Dragon Land. But Drumpy Umpy wasn't happy at home. He was an only child and he was lonely. He didn't like his dragon cousins and he didn't like the other young dragons in Dragons Hole Town. For they called him a freak. He didn't look like them at all.

The naughtiest of them were his cousins Droovy Groovy and Fuji Yuji. Groovy was

the most handsome little dragon in Dragons Hole and Fuji Yuji was the Young Dragons Fire Breathing Champion. These two dragons teased Drumpy Umpy as much as they could. They breathed fire at him. They pulled his tail when the grown-ups weren't looking. They tickled his belly when he was sleeping. Poor Drumpy Umpy!

One peaceful afternoon, when Drumpy Umpy was taking a little nap, Droovy Groovy and Fuji Yuji slithered up to him, one on each side, and ROARED in his ears. Drumpy Umpy woke up with a start! His pretty pink and yellow scales trembled with fright! His claws turned red with anger, when he saw his naughty cousins.

He was mad. But, he knew he couldn't fight both together. In anger he slithered out of the dragon hole, past mamma and grandma and grandpa dragon and all the others. And then he flapped his wings and flew off into the blue.

Drumpy Umpy flew over hill and dale and rock and river till he came to a small town with houses and people and streets and squares.

"Hey, that's the place for me," said Drumpy Umpy and sailed down into a green park between some houses. He had never seen a town before.

And he had only heard legends about people—his grandma's favourite bedtime story was about the brave dragon of yore who captured a princess. A princess, grandma said, was a very pretty creature, with no scales and long brown hair right down to her toes. His grandma told him other tales about nasty creatures called men, who fought dragons with swords.

"Well, I'm not scared," said Drumpy Umpy to himself. "I'm a brave dragon and I'm a friendly dragon. If the other dragons won't play with me, I'll make friends with men and princesses."

So off he went, slithering down the main street, flapping his wings for joy! Oh what a panic there was! People ran pell-mell the minute they saw him. They screamed and they shouted and they ran into the shops and bolted the doors.

"Hello," said Drumpy Umpy trying to be friendly. But no one heard him in all the din. "Hello," he said breathing out a long snort of fire, which is how dragons greet each other. But the people just felt more scared. "It's a dragon," they shrieked and hid under their beds.

Poor Drumpy Umpy! He slithered up and down the town, looking for someone to make friends with, but there was no one around at all.

At last he flapped down under a tall tree and wept. The tears fell down his nose in a little stream, as he sobbed harder and harder.

Now, high up in the boughs of that tree there crouched a rather scared little girl. She had been reading her favourite story-book up in the tree, when the townsfolk raised an alarm about the dragon. She was just going to get down and rush home, when along came Drumpy Umpy. She clung to the branch hoping the strange creature would go away. But, there he was right under her tree and, look, he was crying!

Well, this little girl was rather kindhearted. She climbed down the tree and held out her handkerchief to the dragon. "Don't cry," she said softly.

The dragon looked up. "A Princess, a Princess!"

"I'm Nina," said the little girl. "Who are you?"

"I'm Drumpy Umpy the ugly dragon whom nobody loves," said he, and a big



tear rolled down from his right eye.

"Why," said Nina, "you're a beautiful dragon. I've never seen such a pretty dragon in any story-book."

"Really!" said Drumpy Umpy turning pinker with happiness. "Will you be my friend, Princess?" he asked, liking the little girl's long brown hair and big smile.

"Of course," said Nina.

"Will you come home to Dragons Land with me, Princess?" asked Drumpy Umpy.

"I'd love to pay a visit," she said.

So off they flew to Dragons Hole Town together. The dragons were most surprised to see Drumpy Umpy back—with a little 'princess'. All of Dragons Hole gathered to welcome them. The dragon's cousins thought Drumpy Umpy was a real hero.

At midnight, there was a great banquet in honour of Nina. She looked lovely in her white frilled frock, standing among dragons, old and young, big and small, all flapping their scales in happiness and shouting "Welcome, welcome to Dragons Hole."

Drumpy stood on Nina's right emitting little fire flares in honour of his friend. His parents flapped and flapped, feeling very proud of their son.

Drumpy Umpy flew a very sleepy Nina back home in time for her breakfast.

The two are now great friends. Drumpy Umpy often comes to see his princess. Nina is invited to all the dragon feasts. Some day, if you ask her with a smile, she might take you there!

*Sujata Madhok*

## **The Largest and the Smallest**

SOME sixty years ago, a female blue whale was washed ashore in Cia Argentina de Pesca in South Georgia. It was nearly 34 metres long. This is generally believed to be the largest among the largest and heaviest animals in the world—probably the biggest creature that ever lived.

FIFTEEN years later, yet another female blue whale landed in South Georgia—this time at the Prince Olaf shore station. Its length was 30 metres.

JUST 30 years ago, a 27-metre blue whale was caught in the Antarctic. Its tongue weighed more than 4 tonnes, while its heart touched the sack at nearly 700 kg!

THE rare Bumblebee bat seen in some caves in Kanchanaburi in Thailand is the smallest land mammal. An adult bird will have a wing span of only 160 mm and weigh just 2gr. The largest among bats is the Kalong of Indonesia, which has a wing span of 170cm, and weighs up to 900gr.

AMONG the domestic dogs, the largest is the St. Bernard. There was one known as Schwarzwald Hof Duke in Wisconsin. It weighed 134 kg. Compare this

with the 283gr weight of a Chihuahua that lived in Clemson, South Carolina, and a Yorkshire Terrier owned by a lady in Walthamstow, Greater London.

A FOXHOUND named "Lena" that lived in Pennsylvania in 1944 had the largest litter of puppies—23. But none survived. "Careless Ann", a St. Bernard of Lebanon, Missouri, had also a litter of 23 in 1975—14 of them survived. "Trudi", an Irish setter of Wolverhampton, was the luckiest. All her 17 pups in a 1977 litter survived.

FROM dogs to cats: "Dusty" of Texas lived for 17 long years. She gave birth to 420 kittens in all! Some kitten somewhere must have sure made her a 'great great grandmother'. "Clementine" of New York had the largest litter of 15 kittens, 11 of which survived.

AND now to eggs. The ostrich lays the largest eggs—measuring an average length of 20cm, diameter 15cm, and weighing nearly 2kg. The world's smallest bird, the hummingbird of Cuba, also lays the smallest egg. It normally measures 11mm long, with an 8mm diameter, and weighs 0.5 gr.

*(Next month: The Fastest and the Slowest)*

# The Turkish Cap

THE school bell sounded for recess. Students rushed out of their classrooms. I took out the 'gulli' from my satchel and ran out. Khushal took the 'danda' and followed me. Panna, Raghubir, Brijpal, Prakash, Khushal, Bishen, Nityanand, all ran out, followed by the others. We reached the spot outside our school compound where we usually played.

Prakash drew a big circle. Khushal entered the circle. Today, it was his turn to begin the game. He placed the 'gulli' in the centre of the circle, and took the 'danda' to strike

the 'gulli'. The others took their positions around the circle. Everybody's eyes were on Khushal. He struck the 'gulli' hard. It flew out of the circle and went quite far. None of us could catch it.

Nityanand was the first to reach where the 'gulli' had fallen. Picking it up, he threw it with all his strength towards the circle. Khushal struck it hard again. It could not enter the circle. It went back flying in another direction.

Bishen was covering that side. He tried to catch it but it slipped through his fingers. He picked it up and threw it back towards the circle. Khushal once again hit it back.

I was to take the next turn. But the way Khushal was hitting back, I felt my turn would never come. I would have to wait till tomorrow. I was hoping Khushal would miss just once. Then I would be able to start my turn today, and I could continue tomorrow also. But Khushal was proving too good a player for us today.

Once Panna threw it back. It did not even reach the circle. Khushal struck it forcefully towards Brijpal. Brijpal could not catch it either. It should have been an easy catch. I cursed him for missing it. Khushal was a little away from Brijpal. He called him names for missing such an easy catch. Brijpal was also sorry for the slip. But what could he do now? He threw it back towards the circle. Khushal once again hit it back.

The 'gulli' was now coming towards me. I was ready to catch it. And I was waiting for it too. But in my excitement, I missed it!

All of a sudden there was a lot of noise. A man in kurta and pyjama was standing in the middle of the square. His turkish cap was lying on the ground, upside down. The 'gulli' seemed to have hit the cap on its way to me. The wonder of it all was that the 'gulli' had landed inside the cap.

The man was furious. "You naughty boys! See, what you have done. I will teach you a lesson," he shouted.

"I am sorry, sir," Khushal said promptly.



"I did not do it deliberately. It just happened. But, I am very sorry."

"Is this your playground? Why don't you play in your school?" the man shouted.

Brijpal went up to him. "Sir, we are sorry for what happened. Our school compound is very small."

"That is why we play here everyday," Bipin added.

"And this is how you play here, isn't it?" the man said wryly. "I'll go to your headmaster. Then you will learn how to play and where to play."

Khushal and Brijpal pleaded. "Sir, please excuse us. We will be careful in future."

The man did not appear to be satisfied. I thought I could help the situation. I picked up his cap to hand it over to him. He snatched it from me. I could not remove the 'gulli' from it. Turning round, he started walking rapidly towards the school. All of us followed him, begging his pardon all the way. But he would not listen. I looked around at my friends. They wore a pitiable look. I too was scared of the headmaster's temper.

The man entered the school building, and went straight to the headmaster's office. The peon outside tried to stop him. He just brushed him aside and entered the room. We could hear loud voices coming out. All of us were saying our prayers silently. We had crept to the courtyard facing the headmaster's room. We tried guessing the conversation they were having and the consequences. Soon the peon came and called us. One by one we entered the headmaster's room.

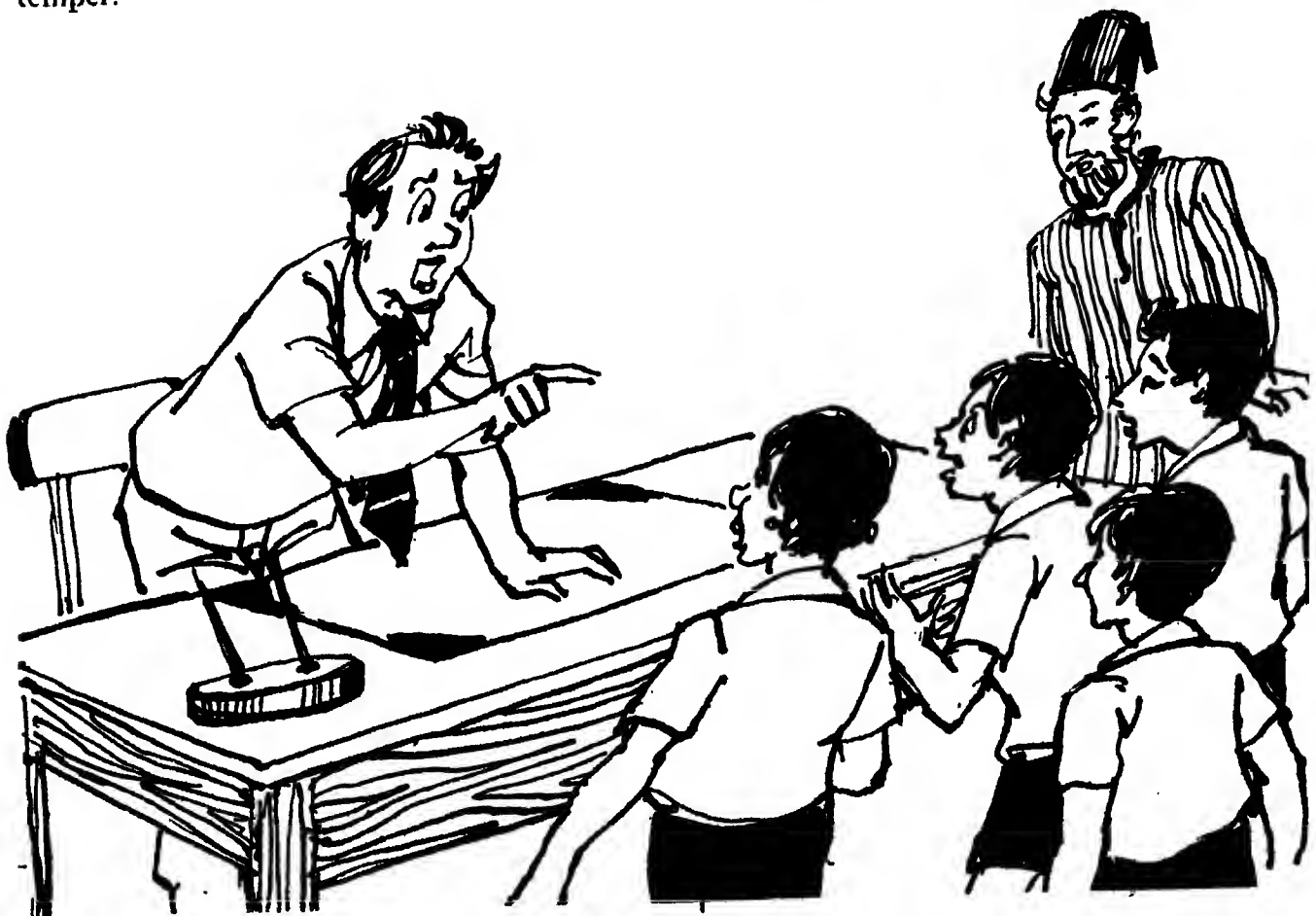
"Who is responsible for all this?" he asked in a thundering voice. "How many times have I told you to keep within the school compound?"

We looked at one another. No one could speak a word. The headmaster raised his voice. "Are all of you dumb? Why don't you speak up?"

I made bold to reply. "Sir, we are sorry. We shall be careful in future."

The headmaster merely said, "Apologise to this gentleman, all of you."

"We have been begging his pardon, sir." It was Brijpal.



"You must apologise in my presence," the headmaster insisted.

We chorused, "We are very sorry, sir."

"OK, boys," the man said and turned towards the headmaster. "And thank you, sir." He looked satisfied, and moved towards the door.

Just as he was going out and we were about to leave, the headmaster asked, "Now, whose strike was it?"

I looked towards Khushal. He was already looking towards me. I looked around. My heart was now beating faster and faster. But how could I name my friend? With a sinking feeling, I decided I would take the blame. A faint smile played on the headmaster's face. Somehow I felt it was not for any punishment that the question was asked. I opened my mouth to reply.

But Khushal was quicker. "Sir, it was

my stroke. I am very sorry."

"What a stroke!" the headmaster exclaimed. "You strike the 'gulli' to hit a man's cap, make it fall, and then land the 'gulli' inside it! A master player, no doubt!"

I could not suppress my laughter. But I could not laugh in the headmaster's presence, either. So, I checked myself with some difficulty, to manage a wide smile. When I looked around, the others were also trying to suppress their laughter. We were eager to go out and have a hearty laugh. The man with the turkish cap also turned round at the door. He too looked amused. Still smiling he went away.

We made haste to come out of the room. Everyone of us had a good laugh.

*B.P. Gupta*

*(Courtesy: Writers Workshop)*

## A Fairy Palace You Can Visit!

**M**ORE than 800 feet under the surface of the earth, fountains and icicles of stone adorn caverns which were unknown to man until a wandering cowboy entered a fissure in the rock and found himself in a fairy palace!

In 1901, the cowboy, Jim White, noticed a stream of bats coming out of an opening in the ground and followed the trail to their cave. Accompanied by a boy from the neighbourhood, Jim explored the cavern, marking the trail with smudges and reeling out lengths of string by which he could find his way back. The place fascinated him for the rest of his life. At first, Jim could not make anyone believe his discovery. As he said later, "They decided I had just gone plumb loco, or else I'd set out to be the world's champion cow-punching liar."

Others have found it equally difficult to describe the immensity and beauty of the caverns, located in the Southwestern State of New Mexico. Even today they have not been completely penetrated or measured. More than 30 miles of caverns have been

explored and three main levels found. The first level is 754 feet (about 250 metres) below the surface, the second 900 feet, and the third more than 1,300 feet. The Big Room, the largest known chamber, is a mile and a quarter in circumference. Its ceiling reaches up 285 feet.

It is not the size of the caverns, however, that every year brings half-a-million people into the depths of the earth for a 4-hour trip, most of which is spent walking. It is the beauty of the limestone that draws these visitors. The rock formations—sparkling, translucent white, or delicately tinted by the presence of other minerals—take many fantastic and beautiful shapes. Chandeliers and columns; festoons and draperies; bunches looking like grapes hanging from the ceilings; forms resembling strange and familiar beasts; pagodas, palaces, and pools—the visitors can see all these and more.

The caverns are believed to have been formed by the action of water on a massive bed of rock known as Carlsbad limestone. Limestone is chiefly made up of calcium

carbonate. In this form it is soluble in water. The rock was deposited in an extension of the ocean millions of years ago, and lifted above the sea level when the Rocky Mountains evolved. Later movements of the earth's crust caused cracks in the surface, allowing water to enter and begin its work of erosion.

The decorative formations began much later. They are the result of evaporation of water which holds limestone in solution. As such water seeps through from above, it is not carried away, but evaporates, depositing limestone, which slowly accumulates. Water dripping on the floor evaporates there as well, and sometimes builds up enough to meet the deposit hanging from the ceiling, to make columns. The hanging formations are called stalactites; the ones built up from the floor are stalagmites.

After Jim White's stories were verified, several branches of the U.S. administration made investigations. The National Geographic Society sent an exploring expedition and published a report in 1924. The U.S. Congress declared the area as Carlsbad Caverns National Park, in 1930.

Five tours of the Caverns are conducted daily, under the supervision of the National Park Service ranger-guides. The rangers lead parties down trails lighted by electricity, which is also used to illuminate the rock displays below. Persons who do not wish to

walk the three miles may use elevators which descend to the Big Room. Some 750 feet below the surface of the earth, there is a lunch room which can serve 1,200 visitors. The steep grade leading to it has been dubbed "Appetite Hill"!

All visitors return to the surface by elevator. The surface area of the Park occupies nearly 10,000 acres, which include parking areas, a wildlife sanctuary, and a desert garden. The garden has many varieties of cactus and other desert plants. In Spring they are especially admired for their colourful blooms.

A nursery takes care of children too small to make the underground tour. An interpretive museum displays samples of rock formations as well as local plants and animals.

The bats that first drew Jim White to the caverns still inhabit the caves, flying out in huge clouds at dusk to hunt for insects. There are five species of bats, and they number an estimated three to five million, the most numerous being the Mexican free-tail bat. During the day they sleep, hanging in great clusters like grey-brown grapes.

A plaque was placed in the Visitors' Center at Carlsbad Caverns in 1959 to honour the memory of the cowboy whose adventurous spirit was responsible for the discovery of one of America's greatest natural wonders.

*(Photographs on facing page courtesy USIS)*

## DIWALI

It's Diwali,  
The festival of lights !  
An event of fun—  
A day of delights !  
  
The houses glitter  
With twinkling bulb-strings  
And flickering candles,  
Wearing luminous rings.

Pampered with sweets  
We light the streets  
With crackers and fireworks  
We greet friends and folks.

Flashes reach the heavens  
Explosions rend the skies,  
Why retreat with fear, my friends,  
Let's light till the crackers end !

*Asha Chohdda*



# CARLSBAD



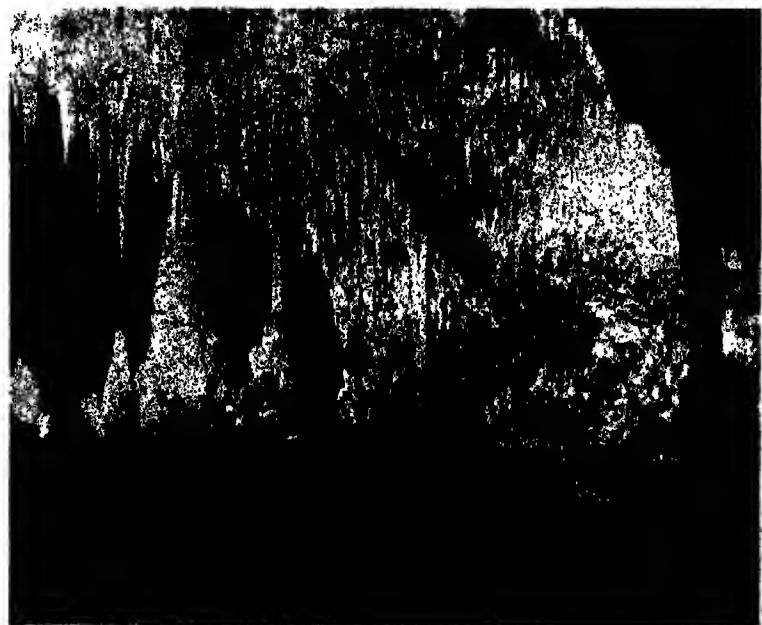
Above: A group of visitors at the entrance to Carlsbad Caverns. A part of the desert garden can be seen in the foreground.

Below: A view of the portion known as the Big Room. The largest chamber in the Caverns, it is a mile-and-a-quarter in circumference. Its ceiling reaches a height of 285 feet (95 metres).

Left: A closer view of the Big Room in the Carlsbad Caverns, showing the Twin Domes and other formations. The Giant Dome at right is 62 feet (19.5 metres) high and 16 feet in diameter.



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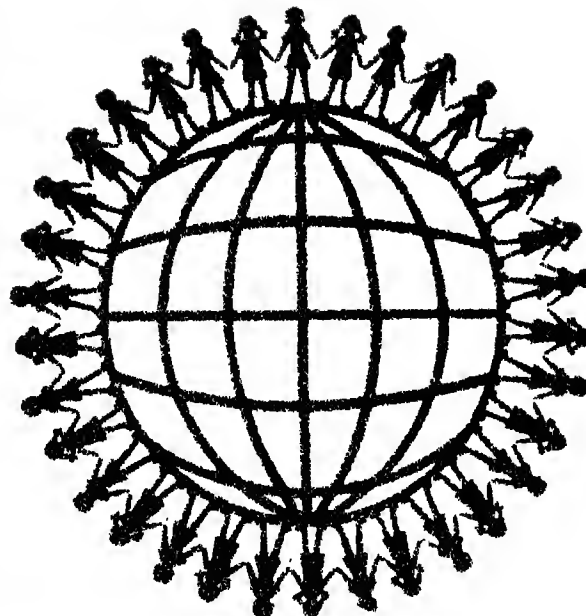
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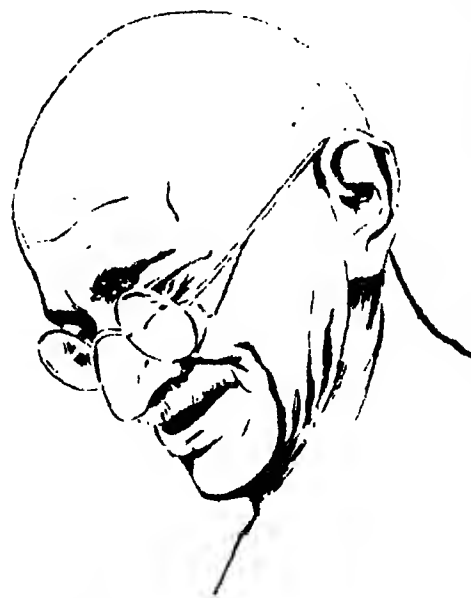
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## **what is the national adult education programme?**

Only one out of three Indians is literate; only one out of five women knows to read and write.

The exclusion of this vast majority of illiterates from the process of education is the most disturbing aspect of educational and social planning. Illiteracy is a serious impediment to the growth of the individual and the country. Through literacy dialogue and action our people can achieve their potential

capability and become aware of their rights and responsibilities.

The National Adult Education Programme has been launched on Gandhiji's birthday.

It aims at covering the vast segment of the illiterate population, mainly in 15-35 age group, as far as possible within a period of five years. Women, those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the tribal people would receive priority



**NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME**

davp 78/301

# THE RAILWAY ADVENTURE

THE big clock above the swinging door to the main railway station in Stuttgart, West Germany, showed ten minutes to four. The Istanbul Express steamed in and the station master gave the green signal for the departure of the D-Zug to Muenchen.

People rushed in with their baggage, pushing their way through the door, murmuring apologies as they moved in, accidentally stepping on each other's shoes or knocking their suitcases against a stranger's knee. A woman was heard shrieking, "Run! We have to get on the train."

People just rushed by, their eyes on the other big clock inside the hall now showing five minutes to four. Some looked out for a newspaper booth, or a stand where they could grab a hot dog with mustard, or just buy a packet of cigarettes.

At exactly four minutes to four, Wolfgang Mueller and Andreas Winter found themselves being pushed through the big swinging glass door of the station. As they made their way in, Andreas felt the hard knock of a heavy suitcase against the hollow of his knee. He flared angrily at the fat man behind him, who called out, "Porter, porter!" in a small, heavy voice.

But at Stuttgart main station there were no porters. The man dropped his two heavy suitcases and wiped his forehead. His eyes scanned the platform for a luggage carrier, or 'kuli', but the only

empty one stood some distance away from the nearby newspaper kiosk. The fat man looked lost.

"Excuse me, sir," said Andreas Winter. "Shall I fetch a kuli for you?"

The fat man sighed, feeling greatly relieved. "Could you do that, my boy? You'll have to be quick; my train leaves in four minutes."

Andreas Winter ran down the length of the hall, grabbed the luggage carrier and pushed it skilfully, making way for the rushing passengers. Then, with Wolfgang Mueller's help, he heaved the heavy luggage on to it.

"Come on, boys, fast!" the fat man said. "The train leaves from platform number eight. Quick!"

With small, nervous steps he led the way. He waved the ticket at the conductor. "Just a single minute left."

Wolfgang and Andreas followed the fat man as fast as they could. Cleverly, they pushed the luggage carrier, giggled and laughed, and tried to keep pace with the fat man who, every now and then, wiped his face and cried, "Just stop at the door of the next compartment."

He hoisted himself up the steps of the first bogie. He turned to the boys and smiled. "We've made it with just a few seconds to go," he said as he pulled the suitcases aboard. Then he leaned out of the window and shook hands with Wolfgang and Andreas, pressing a shining coin into one of their palms. "This is for you both. And thank you!"

"No, sir, no!" protested the boys. "This is not at all necessary."

The fat man wiped his forehead with his white handkerchief. He smiled and waved out to them as the train moved slowly out of the hall.

"Thank you," shouted Andreas and Wolfgang. "Happy journey. Gute Reise!"

Then they looked at each other and at the shining Mark in Andreas's hand.

"Juhul!" they laughed.

"Now we can spend it all. What shall we buy with it?" said Andreas excitedly.

"Ice-cream," said Wolfgang.

"No, chewing-gum," suggested Andreas.

"How about a comic?"

"Or chocolates?"

"Or shall we go for a movie?"

"Or...."

Andreas Winter stopped suddenly and looked down at his feet. He had just stepped on something soft, flat. He bent down to pick it up.

It was a small purse.

"Wolfgang," he whispered. "Look, a purse!"

He slowly turned it between his fingers and then opened it. A number of notes lay stuffed inside





the pocket. He pulled them out and gave some to his friend. The boys counted them—280 Marks in all.

"So much money!" whispered Wolfgang.

Andreas put back all the notes, closed the purse, and asked, "What shall we do with it? Take it to the police station?"

"Or to the station master?" suggested his friend.

"Yes," agreed Andreas, "the best thing to do is to hand it over to the station master."

"Maybe we will get a reward," said Wolfgang. His face lit up at the thought.

"Do you think so?" said Andreas unbelievably.

"Sure," said Wolfgang Mueller. "A friend of my father had found a bag and got 500 Marks as reward."

"So much?" Andreas's eyes widened.

"Sure," said Wolfgang. "My father told me this himself. He said anyone who found and surrendered a lost object to the authorities is legally entitled to a reward. Sometimes up to five per cent of the value of the article."

"Five per cent? Do you think we can ask for five per cent?" Andreas could not believe his ears.

"We don't have to ask for it," Wolfgang replied confidently. "They'll just give it to us!"

"Five per cent of 280 Marks?" said Andreas. "How much will that be?" He tried to calculate.

"About 15 Marks," he guessed vaguely.

"Fourteen to be precise," answered his friend. "Come on, let's go and see the station master."

The station master of Stuttgart main station looked at the flushed faces of the two boys standing before him.

"Now, boys!" he said pleasantly. "Have you lost your tickets?"

"No, no," laughed Wolfgang Mueller. "In fact, sir, we have found something." He placed the purse on the table, right in front of the station master.

He looked down at the purse and then into the frank blue eyes of the boys. "Do you know how much money it contains?" he asked them.

"Yes, sir, 280 Marks," answered Andreas.

"Ah!" said the station master. "That is quite a sum. I thank you very much. It happens so seldom that people, and especially young people of your age, know their responsibilities towards society. I commend your honesty."

Andreas and Wolfgang smiled and looked up at the station master expectantly. Now he would give them their reward!

But the station master simply took the purse, put it into an envelope, and sealed it. "Thank you once again," he said. "Leave your address with me, in case the owner shows up."

After they had written down their addresses, Wolfgang cleared his throat and asked self-consciously, "Sir, do you think we will get a reward?"

"A reward?" asked the station master. "Not until the owner gives it to you, for the Railways are not likely to do so. The rule is that for objects found within the premises of the railway sta-

tion, no reward is given to the finders."

Wolfgang and Andreas looked at each other. Their faces fell. "Oh!" sighed Mueller.

"It doesn't matter," Andreas managed to say as lightly as he could.

"That's life," Wolfgang Mueller shrugged as they said good-bye to the station master and turned to leave.

"Hey, you two," the station master called out. "Just a moment. Come back."

Andreas and Wolfgang returned to watch the station master dial a couple of numbers on the telephone and relate the story of the lost purse to some people. Then, finally, he smiled and nodded and said, "Yes, I think they would like that, sir. That is very nice. Thank you, sir." He replaced the receiver and smiled at the two boys. "Listen. You said you want a reward. How would you like to go down to Ulm, standing in the locomotive right next to the driver?"

"Why, that's terrific!" cried Andreas and Wolfgang together, and clapped their hands in excitement. They could hardly contain themselves. "When shall we go? Today? Now?"

"Hey, take it easy, boys!" The station master laughed. "First get the permission from your parents. There is a train tomorrow, in the afternoon."

The next day, at exactly 2.40 p.m., Andreas Winter and Wolfgang Mueller stood next to the driver in the locomotive of the D-Zug bound for Ulm. It was a wonderful experience for the boys. They asked questions about the many knobs and buttons, pressed a couple of switches, and were even allowed to hold the steering wheel in their hands for a few seconds. Wolfgang and Andreas were sure that there was nothing more so exciting as driving a train. The driver laughed good-humouredly and showed them how to blow the whistle. They blew it at least ten times on their way to Ulm.

At the destination, they were welcomed by Ulm's station master and two assistants. They were then helped on to an electric wagon and shown a most modern signalling cabin.

How many questions they asked! How wonderful it was to see the rails shift over to meet another track and to see a train rattle over it as it pulled into the station.

Excited, though just a little tired, they sat next to the driver as the train pulled back to Stuttgart main station. They shook hands with the locomotive driver and jumped down to the platform to fall right into the arms of the station master.

"Did you like your trip?" he asked and smiled at them.

"Oh, it was wonderful," replied Wolfgang and Andreas. "Thank you so much."

"Well, there is something else still waiting for you." The station master smiled mysteriously as he beckoned to them. "Follow me."

The two boys looked at him curiously, their excitement rekindled. "Something else?"

But the station master just winked at them. As  
(Continued on page 20)



**“How do you like  
my new watch?”**

How do you think I got it? A birthday present? No. A reward for getting 100 in maths? No. I bought it through my own savings at UCOBANK. Yes friend, you too can *open* an account with UCOBANK. It's so simple. They're such friendly people. And so helpful."



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**"NO**, Mummy, such a thing can never happen," wailed Nisha.

Mummy tried to console us, but we would not stop crying.

To us it was a great tragedy. We had got up early in the morning to take Honey, our dear kitten, for a walk when we found her lying dead. Her limbs were frozen and she was still as the night. Papu, Nisha and I stared at each other. We really could not ever think of Honey as being dead.

face peeping through the bushes. We went there to find a little kitten with golden brown hair. We saw a small wound on her left side, probably a dog-bite, because of which she could not walk straight. We decided to take her home and show her to Uncle Das, the vet. As we approached the house, I suddenly remembered something. "Papu, Nisha," I cried, "we can't take kitty home. You jolly well know that Mummy will not allow her in the house. She might say the cat will



## **"HONEY, MY DEAR"**

Mummy and Daddy insisted that we bury her somewhere near the garden. So, after giving Honey a last look, we parted forever and forever.

We did not feel like eating anything ever again. But Daddy would not stand any nonsense from us. As we climbed the staircase, our eyes were filled with tears. Back in our room Papu said, "Remember the day we had found her?"

Yes, we all remembered that day. How could we forget it? We had been playing in the garden when, suddenly, we saw a small

spoil the whole place."

Oh, dear, what would we do? We all thought over the problem until Papu came up with a solution. "I know what we will do," he said. "We will keep her in our room. We will clean it up ourselves, so the maid won't come up, and anyway the kitten is too small to climb down the stairs."

We all thought it an excellent idea and thumped Papu on the back. We reached our room and made a very cozy bed for the kitten. We placed an old bedsheet in a big wooden box with some straw underneath.

"What shall we call her?" asked Nisha. "Let's call her Honey," she added. So that was that.

We got some ointment for Honey from Uncle Das and then returned home quickly, afraid of Mummy going to the room and searching for us, only to find the dear little thing there.

To our luck, for several days no one knew about Honey. One day, when we returned from school, we saw Honey trying to climb the drawing room sofa. We left our bags on the floor and picked her up quickly and started running up the staircase when, suddenly, Mummy's voice came right behind us. "Children," she called out to us.

Without turning back we stopped to listen. "I have brought a present for you. Can you guess what it is? Well, it is a little kitten and . . ." But we stopped her by a sudden spurt of shouting, screaming, and hugging. Papu began to dance like a zombie, a dance that we called Zing-zang-zong. Nisha and I screamed at the top of our voices. "Well, well, wha-wha-what is all this?" said Daddy, and we all started laughing when

we saw the puzzled look on his face.

Everybody liked Honey and she soon made friends with our parents, too. She would sometimes jump into my work-basket or play with the ball of wool. She came for a walk daily, in the morning and evening.

She liked fish and meat, rice and milk or curd. Sometimes she would mew loudly in the kitchen and scare our maid. We did not teach her how to jump or other acrobatics. She learned all sorts of tactics by herself!

When it came to bathing, Honey was really very naughty. She would run away whenever we even mentioned 'water'. Otherwise, she was a good-mannered cat. She used to lick herself clean early in the morning with her little pink tongue.

Whenever anyone of us said, "Honey, my dear," there she would be, right next to us.

"Now everything is over!" we sighed. We will never forget Honey all our lives and will never keep a pet, because we know we shall not get another one as cute as her.

*Amrita Bhatia (13)*  
*India*

## A WALK BY MOONLIGHT

Once I went out to the moonlight,  
My head was in my hand  
It was night  
And I was walking by moonlight,  
I saw many sights

I saw the clouds above me  
shining like silver  
And the silver-tipped petals  
I heard the hooting of an owl  
And the rustle of someone  
on the ground

The silver carpet of leaves,  
the whisper of the breeze  
And the waving of the trees  
Made the world look lovely.

*Alpana Arora (13)*  
*India*

# Earthlings versus Moonlings

**T**HIS is Ravi, wishing a good morning to all the listeners on earth and the moon. The cricket match between the Earthlings and the Moonlings is about to begin here, at the Children's Stadium.

There is bright sunshine, and the ground is packed all round with earthlings and a large number of moonlings who have specially come down to witness this historic Inter-Planetary match.

I can now see the two captains coming out of the pavilion. My binoculars can spot out the copper coin in the palm of one of the Umpires. He is giving it to Moonski, the Moonling captain. He has tossed it now with his right foot. You can hear the loud cheer, as the loudspeakers announce that Greg Chappel, the Earthling captain, has called right and has opted to bat first.

The Moonling skipper appears to be disappointed. He is trotting back in a zig-zag fashion, his big head drooping towards his left shoulder.

Well, here's the big applause for the Moonling team. They are coming out to field, led by their captain. He is throwing the ball in turns at his teammates. They are flicking it back to the captain with their index finger. They are all over seven feet tall and look fighting fit.

Here come our opening batsmen, Glenn Turner and Sunil Gavaskar. Gavaskar takes his guard from the Umpire and he is looking around the field. There are six fielders on the leg side, and I can see another one stretching at the covers. The captain himself is sitting at short mid-on.

He has given the ball to Moonlings famous fast bowler, Zexolsee. Apparently, he is to open the bowling.

Zexolsee is measuring his run. Well, well, he has walked up to the boundary. There he takes off his jersey and the moon-cap. He throws them beautifully towards Umpire Zutshi. The Umpire catches them and signals Zexolsee to bowl.

Here he comes. He is bowling in a peculiar fashion. He is sprinting like an Olym-

pic torchbearer. He has taken a running jump, flies over the non-striker's stumps and hurls the ball towards Gavaskar's bat. Gavaskar moves forward confidently and slashes at the incoming ball. It goes towards mid-on. Beautifully fielded there by the Moonling skipper. While remaining seated, he brought his left leg in a symmetrical arc, and the ball hitting his shoe's sole has gone straight back to Zexolsee.

He is coming back to bowl again. The ball pitches right at the middle stump. He is out. Gavaskar's out! Trying to cut the ball, he moved back and the ball travelling at about 150 miles per hour pierced through the bat to hit his middle stump. Two side stumps have been uprooted and are being brought back from the boundary. Look, my scorer has found one of the bails in our commentators' box! It has been thrown up thirty feet and travelled all the way from the centre of the field.

I am trying to locate the middle stump through my binoculars. Oh, yes, the field staff is walking up with brooms to sweep its pieces strewn all over the plush green field.



That was the end of Zexolsee's over. The field is changing. Now, Palemice, their other star speedster, is coming on to bowl to Turner. He too bowls in a novel way. He does not take a run. He stands near the stumps at the bowler's end, stretches his hand and then jerks up and down violently. Then while still in mid-air, he throws the ball.

Well, here he bowls a short one. A missile bouncer. Turner ducks. The ball goes out of the Stadium. The game is held up for the ball to be brought back.



Palemice again. The ball pitches short. Well it's gone. Can't be seen. The fielders are running towards the place where it landed. Turner has also walked up. I can see the Umpires striding towards the place.

Can you tell us what's going on, Mr. Scorer? No, you can't? Well, we'll wait for the Umpire's signals.

Oh funny, funny indeed! You know the ball landed short. Its terrific speed carried it six inches deep inside the ground. That's why I could not see the ball. Well, Umpire Bhoomi is digging out the ball. Chappel has walked up to inspect it. But Moonski seems disinterested. He is obviously taking a nap at mid-on.

The crowd is howling with pleasure. It's fun for them. They haven't seen such a wonderful match.

I can see steel crash-helmets being brought by the Earthlings twelfth man. Glen and Greg both have now put them on.

Zexolsee comes running and jumping to bowl to Greg. For Greg, he has switched on to round the wicket, and is bowling with his left hand. Greg jumps high to meet the ball. He has hit it towards the covers. The fielder there was caught napping. Earthlings get four runs. That makes their total 30.

There is a bowling change after drinks. Mooncracker, a leg spinner, is coming on to bowl. For him the field placement is, skipper himself at the first slip, Zexolsee at the second, Palemice at silly mid-on, Korenface at forward short leg, and—well Mooncracker has bowled. The ball is spinning. My God, it's spinned so much that it's come back to Mooncracker himself. The crowd gives a standing ovation. They have never seen such great cricket.

Karentoes is just about to bowl to the new batsman, Richard. He bowls after giving a circular movement to his arm. Richard is crouching. The wicketkeeper has moved away at about 30 degrees from the wicket. The ball lands short, takes an angular turn, and goes straight to the face of Palemice. I think he is hurt.

Oh, no, he is not. He just bared his teeth, and their shine reflected the ball to the wicketkeeper.

For those who have just tuned in, I'll repeat the score. Earthlings were all out for 52, out of which 42 are extras made up by runs given against every lost ball. I can see the Earthlings team, led by Greg Chappel, walking out to field. Japmoon and Many-moon, the Moonling openers, are also coming out. I will now hand over the mike to Saumil to continue the commentary.

Thank you, Ravi. Good afternoon to you all from Saumil. And now Thomson is bowling to Japmoon from the pavilion end. A good fast ball. Japmoon comes running out of his crease. He has lifted the ball very high, might be caught. Two fielders are running. But no! The ball has got stuck in an eagle's beak. The bird has flown away with it. There's a claim for six runs by Japmoon. The Umpires are consulting each other. Yes, they have now signalled and the runs are being given to the Moonlings.

A new ball has been brought in. The game is starting after ten minutes delay. As Thomson has retired shocked, Roberts is going to bowl to Many-moon.

My God, Many-moon seems to be floating in the air. Oh, is it so? I have just been told by the Moonlings Manager that Many-moon is wearing hydrogen filled shoes, so that the pitch does not get damaged. Roberts bowls. Many-moon hits the over-pitched ball. He has lifted it towards the TV cameras. The fielders are running to catch it. But the cameraman and the TV commentator are scrambling down from their box. They seem to be in great hurry to avoid the ball's impact.

It has been a great day. Great cricket and lots of fun. After a few overs, Greg had rightly decided to place all his fielders at the boundary line. The Umpires decided to judge from the members' stand. They all seemed afraid of Moonling batsmen's hitting prowess.

We now take you back to the studio, and will be back on the air tomorrow at 10.30 again, to tell you all about the second day's play.

*Saumil Patel and Ravi Kashyap*

IT was a warm September afternoon. The very air stood still. Majid came slowly down the waterfront, making for the jagged line of country-boats that lay along the edge of the river Hooghly. He was late. As he walked, eyes screwed against the sun, Majid knew that his grandfather would be angry.

Not that this was unusual. In fact, Grandfather was always angry. Sometimes there was a hint of disapproval in his eyes. Sometimes he even swore under his breath. Often he beat Majid, with the flat of his palm calloused by years of hard rowing.

## A GAME OF MARBLES



Majid winced. Things had been very different a year ago—when his father was alive. Even Grandfather was different then; not so grim-looking, not so old. There was also more to eat, plenty of rice and a taste of fish most days of the week. But all that was over. Grandfather had suddenly lost interest in things. The work on the river had long since passed into the hands of younger men. The family boat had grown old and fallen into disrepair. Grandfather moored it on a little inlet under a giant banyan tree. Most of the time he sat in the prow and complained: there wasn't enough rice and no money and nobody to live for except a worthless grandson.

Majid paused under the shade of the

banyan tree to wipe his face. Out on the river, the sun shone fiercely and the waves were a clear gold. Majid eased the turban from his head, slowly making his way to the water's edge. 'I'll clean out the boat today,' thought he. 'Perhaps that will please Grandfather. And then, in the evening, I can play marbles.' All at once, Majid stopped. The marbles! Where had he left them?

He was playing with them in the morning when Grandfather called from the waterfront. And so urgent were the summons that Majid had to obey at once. Grandfather had sent him running to town to find out from Imam Din, the tobacco merchant, if there was any 'zarda' going cheap. There-



after—ah well, that was a long story. At Imam Din's, Majid had met Ismail. Ismail had just come back from Calcutta, and for three long hours, he related his adventures and Majid listened, lost in wonder. . . . But—but, what about the marbles?

Majid ran to the water's edge, where the keel of his grandfather's boat scraped the mud flats. He scanned the wet earth with anxious eyes. The marbles were not there. He felt along the sides of the boat, dredging the muddy water with his fingers. The marbles were not there either.

Majid stood up. With all the bravado of his eleven years, he was lost. What had happened to his marbles? He looked at the boat accusingly. 'The ugly old thing,' he muttered. 'I'm sure it is hiding my marbles underneath.' Then he saw his grandfather, fast asleep under the awning of the boat, and Majid's spirits sank further. 'If it were not for him, I'd search the boat here and now. Six marbles. All gone. . . . ' Anger rose within him. 'I'm not going back to the boat. Never again!'

He thrust the end of his turban against his eyes, hoping to stop the tears. Boys do not cry. . . . Blindly he stumbled back to the shade of the banyan, from there to the waterfront, and up the street that led to town.

Majid came back at sundown, his anger spent and the fear of his grandfather upon him. He had bathed at a wayside tap and looked quite defenceless with the grime washed from his cheeks. From a distance he saw Grandfather sitting with his back to the waterfront. Majid went and stood behind him, not daring to speak. Minutes passed while the boat rocked gently in the water and the old man sat where he was, lost in thought. And then someone cried aloud, from two boats away, "It's Majid! He's back!"

Grandfather turned slowly as Majid mumbled with a thudding heart, "Kaka, Imam Din asked me to go for the 'zarda' tomorrow."

There was silence. Majid waited for the reproof that did not come. Grandfather didn't say even once, "Where were you all day?" Presently he rose and fetched the old enamel plate which they shared between

them. "You haven't eaten," he said, and Majid suddenly remembered that he was starving.

When he had scraped the last grain of rice from his plate, Majid washed it and went and sat near his grandfather. "May I clean out the boat for you today?" he asked.

But the old man appeared not to have heard him. For a while, he gazed into the distance and then asked, with a suddenness that was quite unnerving, "Have you lost anything?"

"Why, yes," stammered Majid, "my marbles. Six of them."

Without a word, his grandfather untied the end of the loin-cloth at his waist and laid out the marbles on the boy's palm. There was a pause and then the old man was talking. "It seems like yesterday. Your—your father used to play marbles around here, too. One afternoon I sent him to town to buy salt. He left the marbles on the mud flats, right beside the boat. We never found them again. How that boy fretted, for days on end! That's why—. You grow more and more like him, you know."

His smile came in spurts. Slowly, awkwardly, he patted Majid on the head. Just then somewhere, out on the river, a tug hooted, and Majid thought he had never heard a sweeter sound in all his life.

*Pratibha Nath*

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# THE FIVE-RUPEE NOTE

**I**T was a warm day as Geetha skipped along to school. The sea breeze blew now and then, and made the coconut trees gently shake their heads. Geetha's village was on the Malabar coast in Kerala. She loved her village. On her way to the school she used to stop, occasionally, under the shade of a tree and admire the scenery. Several families whom she knew would be at work in the nearby fields. Geetha would greet them with a friendly 'Namaskaram'.

Some of her classmates would join her on the way. They would talk happily of the latest happenings in the village. That day the talk was all about the coming 'Onam' festival and the needlework and handicrafts

exhibition to be held in the school during the holidays.

Gaily chatting about it, Geetha and her friends arrived at their school. It was a clean mud hut with a fresh palm thatched roof. The children sat down on mats laid out on the cowdung washed floor. When the teacher arrived, they stood up to greet him. He was very much liked by the students. He was a learned man, and everyone in the village respected him and sought his advice on important matters. At noon, after school, the pupils went back home for their meal, and to help their parents at home or in the fields.

Geetha lived with her grandparents whom



she loved very much. Her mother had died soon after Geetha was born; her father had gone away to a big city to try and earn his living.

As she walked home, Geetha thought of her grandparents. Apapa, as she called her grandfather, was very old now and could hardly see. Her father had bought him a pair of spectacles. But, two days ago the frame had broken and he had difficulty in using it. Geetha had tied a piece of wire to it and tried to keep the lens in the frame. However, she wished to take the glasses to the nearby town for proper repair. 'Oh,' she thought, 'why are we so poor?' She envied her friend, Lakshmi, who came from a well-to-do family. 'How smart she looks in her starched skirts and blouses!'

When Geetha reached home, she found Apapa waiting for her, sitting as usual on the wooden stool outside. He patted her head and asked if she had had a good day. Geetha's grandmother, whom she affectionately called Amuma, was sitting near the window busy with her embroidery. Geetha, too, had learned to embroider designs from Amuma, and she loved the bright-coloured threads she had been taught to use. Some of the pieces she did were to be put on show at the handicrafts exhibition.

Next day, Geetha reached her school early, much before anyone else had. As she walked to her classroom, she saw an unusual piece of paper lying on the floor. She picked it up and her heart leaped, for it was a crisp five-rupee note. She had never held one before. She examined it carefully. Then she quickly hid it in her bag. What a lot she could do with it! Why, she could even get Apapa's glasses mended. Thoughts like these raced through her mind—until, suddenly, something deep inside her pricked these dreams. She felt she ought to report her find to the teacher.

'But,' she argued with herself, 'what about the saying, "Finders keepers, losers weepers"?' She decided to keep quiet about the note. After all, she was only going to do something good with it.

In a few minutes, her classmates arrived. Then the teacher also came along. They greeted him with respect. They liked him because he always made the lessons interest-

ing. He talked of the happenings in various parts of the country. How proud they felt to belong to such a large country!

That morning, he told them how the dacoits of Madhya Pradesh had decided to surrender their arms and give up their devilish life and turn respectable citizens. He said everyone, whether he be rich or poor, old or young, could contribute to make India a strong and united nation.

Geetha listened to the teacher attentively and was very thoughtful. Could a simple village girl like her really help her country? she wondered. When the teacher asked her a question, she did not hear him; her thoughts had carried her so far away that he had to ask her a second time.

Geetha felt miserable, because she could not forget the five-rupee note. She knew it would be wrong to pocket the money. She was unable to concentrate on her lessons. Finally, she decided that she would tell her teacher about the five-rupee note.

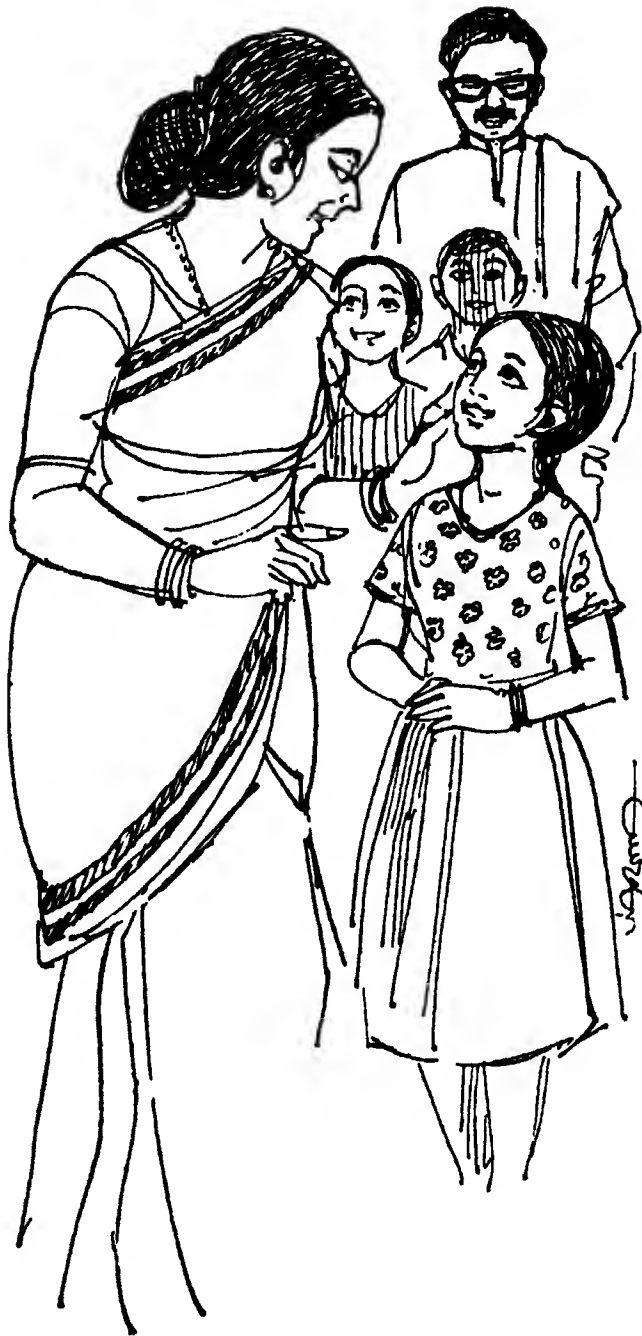
School over, Geetha waited till everyone had left. Then she went up to the teacher. Her legs were trembling. He looked at her kindly and asked her what the matter was. Geetha told him how she had picked up the note and was tempted to keep it for repairing Apapa's glasses. The teacher listened to her and said, "My child, the means are more important than the end. We must always try to find honest ways to fulfil our desires."

Geetha handed the money to the teacher. He patted her and smiled. "The Almighty never fails to reward an honest deed."

Geetha skipped home. She felt as though a great weight had gone off her mind. That evening she told Apapa and Amuma about the note and what the teacher had told her. They felt proud of her being so honest.

That week end, the needlework and handicrafts exhibition was ushering in 'Onam' festivities at the school. Everyone was excited. Some children came early to clean and decorate their classrooms. They neatly arranged their desks and displayed on them all the work they had done in the year. There were several items of needlework that Geeta had done, including a gay coloured wall-hanging, a tablecloth, and some handkerchiefs.

Suddenly, Geetha saw the teacher beckon



to her. He was talking to Lakshmi's mother. Whatever did he want? As she approached, she heard him tell the well-dressed lady, "This is Geetha. She is the one who has done those pieces of needlework you so much admired. And it was Geetha who found Lakshmi's five-rupee note and handed it to me."

Lakshmi's mother patted Geetha and asked her, "Will you do some embroidery for me? I will pay for them."

Geetha was tongue-tied at the sudden turn of luck. She just nodded her head. But her eyes sparkled. It was like a gift from

heaven—getting paid for one's hobby!

She could not wait to tell the news to her grandparents. She thought she would soon have enough money to get Apapa's glasses repaired. The Almighty had indeed rewarded her for her small act of honesty.

*Linda Pierce*

## THE LAZY CLOUDS

Two little clouds were lazy  
Their mother said, 'Get up, lazy bones,'  
But they said, 'No, no, no.'  
'You go out and see how nice the  
weather is,'

But they said, 'No, no, no.'  
She said, 'You should walk, lazy bones.'  
So they began to walk, walk, walk,  
A mountain dashed 'gainst them  
And they began to cry.....

*Ujwala V. Dalvi (8)*  
*India*

## CLOUDS

In the clear blue sky,  
I see some clouds go by;  
A cloud-cat so shy,  
With her kitten nearby.  
They are all white,  
For my eyes a pretty sight,  
The cat hiding near the bushes,  
The rat quickly rushes.  
The cloud-cat and the rat,  
The owl and the bat,  
They all go together,  
To call the woodpecker.  
And this was in the evening—  
When I saw the clouds a-sailing.

*Mangala Gangoli (9)*  
*India*

# A LIE TO SAVE A LIFE

THERE were forty boys and girls in Miss Jalusha's class. Heju was one of her best pupils. She was a very quiet little girl, intelligent and obedient. Whenever Miss Jalusha left the classroom asking the children not to talk and make noise in her absence, Heju invariably was the only one who would sit quietly till the teacher returned. She liked Heju for her good behaviour.

Miss Jalusha had made up a rhyme which she made her class recite every morning:

Of hard work, my children  
Never feel shy,  
Be truthful and honest  
And never tell a lie!

One day she asked the children if any of them had ever told a lie. "Those of you who have never lied, raise your hands."

All of them raised their hands, except Heju. The teacher was perturbed. Her Heju, telling a lie? She could not even imagine it. "Why haven't you raised your hand, Heju? I've known you to be a very truthful and honest girl. I find it hard to believe that you have lied."

"Miss, I had to tell a lie," said Heju in a



slow, measured tone.

"You had to?" asked Miss Jalusha, unbelievably.

"Yes, Miss," Heju narrated, "it was a year ago. A Sunday morning. I was playing in the garden with my younger sister. I was throwing a ball to her and she was throwing it back to me.

"Suddenly a young lady in a green sari came running into our garden. Her hair was tossed up, and she appeared frightened. I looked at her, and she simply put a finger on her lips and ran to the back of our house. Fortunately, Rex was not around....."

"Rex?" interrupted Miss Jalusha and she

suddenly realized that the children still had their hands raised! "You may bring your hands down, children! Ah! yes, who is Rex, Heju?"

"Rex is our terrier, Miss. He's a very ferocious dog. Of course, we don't let him loose during the day. He was chained in the verandah. The lady ran to the back of the house.

"About two or three minutes later, two tall hefty men came running and stopped at our gate. They really looked bad men, Miss. They asked me if I had seen a lady in a green sari. Though I don't like telling lies, I knew that if I spoke the truth, they might catch the lady and harm her. I was myself terrified on seeing them. I couldn't speak. So I just shook my head to say 'no'. But I think they guessed from my face that I was lying. The two then started running towards the back of the house. I rushed to the verandah and unchained Rex, shouting, 'shool' Rex barked and charged at one of the men and caught hold of his trousers between his teeth. My shouting and Rex's barking



brought my daddy out and he came running and caught the man. The other had by then escaped. We telephoned the police, and they came and took the man away. He confessed to having committed many robberies.

"Meanwhile, the lady had come inside. She told us how the men had caught her and were trying to snatch away her ornaments, and how she had managed to free herself and run away from them.

"So, Miss, I had to tell a lie to save that lady. My daddy, of course, told me that I had

done the right thing."

"Indeed you had!" said Miss Jalusha, heaving a sigh of relief. "A foolish child in your place would have told the men where the lady was hiding in the backyard. But being intelligent, you had the presence of mind. A lie is something which makes you feel ashamed after you have told it. But this lie of yours saved someone from being robbed or attacked. We are all proud of you, Hejul!"

*Hazel Gomez*

## THE TALKING CAVE

A hungry lion named Rough Claw  
Wandering in the forest a cave he saw.  
He thought some creature would come at night  
And thus provide him with a tasty bite.

Presently a jackal named Curd Face came about  
And saw pugmarks going into the cave, but none coming out.  
To test the plausibility of his fears a trick he wanted to try  
Like wishing the cave and asking for a reply.

So, he yelled out a greeting to the cave  
While, the lion thinking the cave spoke, a roar in reply gave.  
Curd Face thought, through all the forests he had walked  
Never had he come across any cave that talked.

Realizing Rough Claw's crafty plan,  
The jackal laughing at the lion's foolishness ran.

*Shiv Dhawan*

*(Adapted from 'The Panchatantra')*





# ME AND MY MOTHER

**T**HE swirling November mist circled my head. Pale, lukewarm sunshine glistened in cylindrical bars through the tall trees. Under my feet the dry autumn leaves scrunch-scrunched as I stepped on them viciously, angrily.

"Everything is right with the world except me and my mother," I thought. I bent and picked up a pebble and chucked it at a couple of birds that were driving me nuts with their cacophony. They flew away in mock anger, leaving me once again to think my thoughts. And they weren't very merry ones either. "Damn," I muttered, "damn." This really needed sorting out and I was making for my favourite 'think place' down by an angry stream that flowed through the forest near our house in Siliguri.

It all began early this morning when I returned from my daily jog and refused to eat the wheat porridge. "I'd rather have an omelette," I told Mummy.

"You can have one after you've finished the porridge," she replied.

"But I don't think I said I want one after I've had the porridge," I persisted.

"Stop acting smart and eat that porridge," she replied and added as an afterthought, "I think you'd be sensible if you listened

to me while I spoke to you nicely. If I were to be treating you according to your age, I'd be spanking you for insolence."

I didn't like the way she said your age. Thirteen is no mean age, after all. But I ate the porridge and didn't have an appetite left for the omelette, and you should have seen her face when she brought it in all steaming and I said I can't eat it.

The first day of the 'Puja' hols, and I already had my mother on the wrong side. But things got worse when my gang turned up on their bikes and suggested a biking picnic. "Ma," I shouted, "can I have some biscuits and that omelette for the picnic?"

My mother walked into the drawing room where I was putting my sneakers on. "I have a suggestion," she said tucking her 'pallav' at the waist. "Why don't you carry some 'sambar' and rice?"

I didn't like her tone or suggestion, so I looked up at her. Boy! did she seem mad! "Baccho," she addressed my friends. "Pillu can't go for the picnic...."

"Whaa...what!" I screamed.

But she continued unperturbed. "Today is Saraswati puja and Pillu beta has promised to make all the flower garlands for the puja."

So, the nice children of which my gang is made up, cycled away without me. And, of course, good ol'e Pillu beta just stomped and stamped her feet, but promptly went and gathered each and every flower in the garden. 'I'll give her a garland to talk about,' I thought and threaded the

needle with a mile-long thread. Well, I started off in defiance but the garland did look very beautiful, long and thick with fragrant flowers. When I gave it to Ma, she held it in her hands with delicate reverence. "It's beautiful," she said. "I'm sure Saraswatima will be pleased, and you'll do well this year. Now, go out and play till I call you for 'aarti'."

Mothers, I tell you, are impossible to beat. I've been coming first in class ever since I can remember, but she still hopes I'll "do well". And pray with whom was I to play now? A couple of sissy dolls? I picked up the book I had brought from the library yesterday, 'Irish Folk Tales', and proceeded to the stream.

The sand is grey and some of its particles glisten. Big trees with monstrous leaves have their knotty roots spreading into the

water. One such tree signifies my 'think place'. Old Gnarly's ebony trunk makes an ideal back-rest while I sit on its thick strong roots, my feet dangling in the cool water, sunshine dancing on dappled ripples. Then I can forget most of my grouses and dream and dream.....

But today I was restless, just couldn't get myself to sit and read or think. So I waded in the stream collecting driftwood for my Ikebana course and thought of all my friends having a grand time. But mainly I thought of Baraun. That's another reason I suppose Ma didn't let me go for the picnic. I wonder what she's got against him. There, that set me off again. I flung a particularly nice driftwood back into the water and plonked on Gnarly's fattest root, and sighed. 'It's tough to be me,' I thought. With a long stick I had picked on the way, I beat



the ripples in the water. I lifted the stick to form a long glistening stream of water to fall from one end, and continued my game till I heard a voice above my head.

"You can get out this minute," I heard it say. "I will not tolerate no child of mine turning a hippie. If you stay here, you stay like good children, or get lost."

And then a little thin voice piped up. "An' sure, we'll get out, man, you can't survive with a set of squares." And the next thing I knew ptock, ptock, two things had fallen next to me. I bent to examine them.

"Man, dig those eyes," I heard one say.

I hastily drew my head back. "Who or what are you?" I asked puzzled, not daring to move for fear of squashing them. "You speak English fairly well.....hey, I say, you're pretty unusual creatures," I said excitedly, noticing their mini size and peculiar looks. They both came hop hop up my outstretched legs.

"Ever heard of leprechauns?" the girl thing asked me.

I could make out one was a girl and the other a boy because of their leaf and petal clothes.

"Leprechauns? Yes," I replied. "In story-books, in Irish fairy tales, in fact. They don't exist, you know."

"And I suppose we are hallu....hallucinations.....I mean, we aren't real, eh?" the boy leprechaun said. "Sister, you're in a bad shape if you can't see," he mocked.

"Pop's and Mom's ancestors were brought here by an Irish couple long back. But they are real squares, man. They've lived on those knotty branches for the last century, refusing to change with the times. Sheena an' me, we wanted to go to the Ladakh monastery, but they wouldn't hear of it. Imagine telling two grown-up (I couldn't help chuckling) kids what time to get up, to do square chores like collecting honey and dew..... Sheena an' me, we are pushing off. We've had about as much as we can stand. Down with parental authority!" they finished in chorus.

I was getting more and more confused by the minute, but a lot of what they said sounded familiar. "What time to get up.... chores to do....."

"Ah," I said, "but why down with parent-

al authority? After all, think of all that your parents do for you...."

"Oh boy! Sheena, another square!" said the impossible imp, and before I knew it, they both had disappeared.

I picked up my stick to resume beating the water....and woke up with a start. Ugh. Imagine, I'd been dreaming all those lovely creatures. And here I was sitting, feet in the water, toes being nibbled by a cheeky fish. I shoved it off and dusted the sand from my jeans. In the distance I could hear the batman calling, "Pillubaby! Memsaab bula rahi hain!"

And with the words, "Why down with parental authority?" ringing in my ears, I started the trek back home.

*Vaijayanti Savant*

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*(Continued from page 4)*

they reached the station restaurant, a waiter bowed and opened the door for them.

"Come on, boys. You must be hungry." The station master laughed. "Today you can order anything you like!"

"Oh!" Andreas and Wolfgang looked at each other. "To tell you quite frankly," they confessed, "we are rather hungry."

They were led to a table covered with a spotless white table cloth.

The waiter handed them a menu card and waited for their orders.

Their eyes ran down the long list of names of dishes they had never eaten at home: soups and cocktails, salads and meat, vegetables and fish dishes, with difficult and unpronounceable names.

They ordered bacon and veal pates, because it sounded so french. French food, Andreas's mother had said, is one of the world's best.

"It must be," they agreed, after they had relished the pates and wiped their lips with their napkins.

Then they had a large "Wiener Schnitzel" with green peas and fried potatoes. That was their favourite dish.

As a sweet dish, they ate a big chocolate ice-cream with lots of whipped cream.

"Something more?" the waiter asked and bowed politely.

But Wolfgang and Andreas just couldn't eat anything more, even if they had wished to.

They both agreed that this had been the most wonderful day in their lives. "Let's find another purse soon at the station," they whispered behind their hands.

But they knew that such a wonderful day would perhaps never be repeated.

*Sigrun Srivastava*

**CHILDREN'S WORLD**

# KAPISH

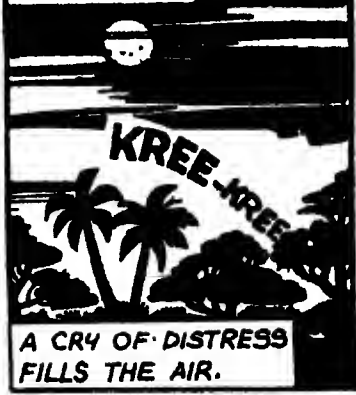


ANANT PAI  
MOHANDAS

IT IS A COLD WINTRY NIGHT. KAPISH, LIKE THE OTHER INHABITANTS OF THE JUNGLE, HAS BEEN ASLEEP FOR SOME TIME.



SUDDENLY —



A CRY OF DISTRESS FILLS THE AIR.

KAPISH WAKES UP WITH A START

BIRDS CRYING. I WONDER WHAT HAS ALARMED THEM?



WHAT IS THE MATTER, KAPISH?

NOTHING, MOTHER. GO TO SLEEP...



ZZZZZ

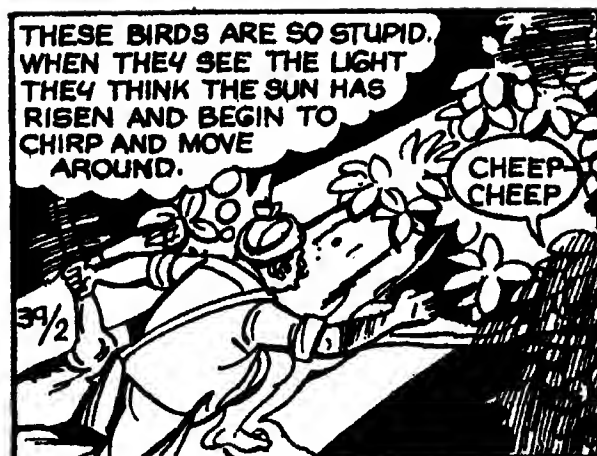
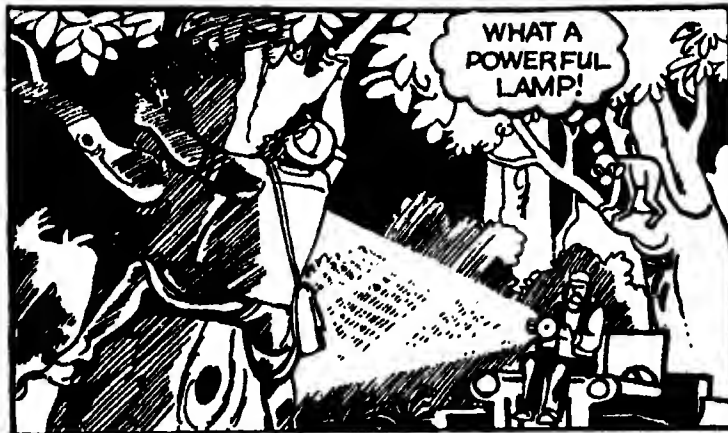
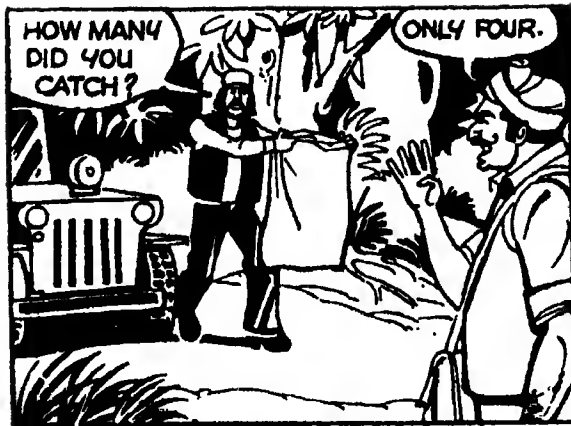
I WILL GO AND SEE IF MY FEATHERED FRIENDS ARE ALL RIGHT.



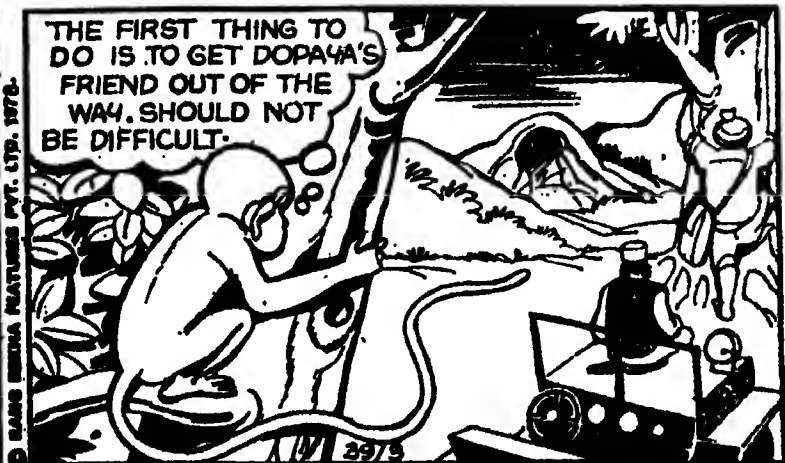
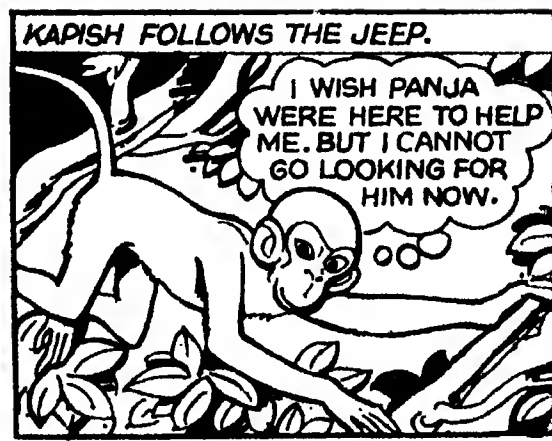
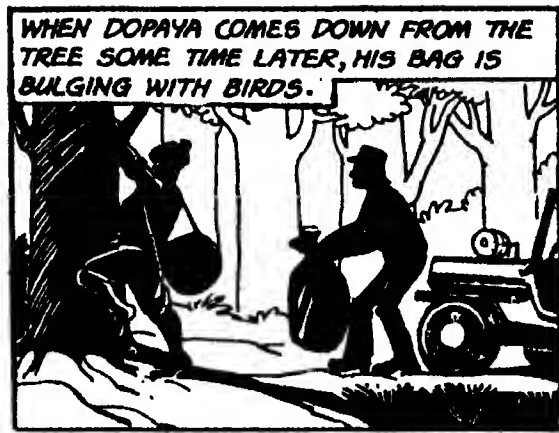
THERE IS A LIGHT AHEAD. THERE MUST BE SOME HUMANS AROUND.

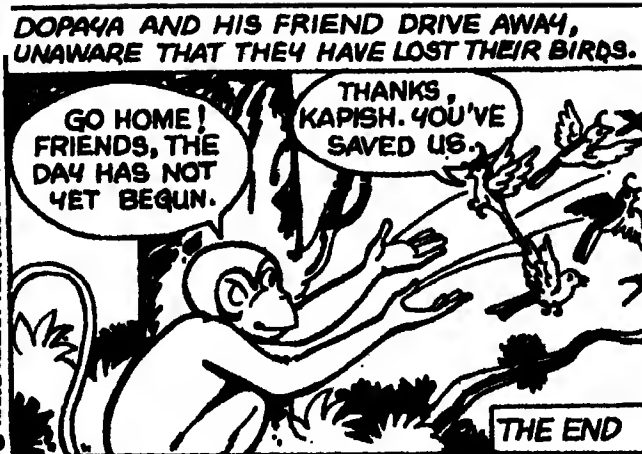
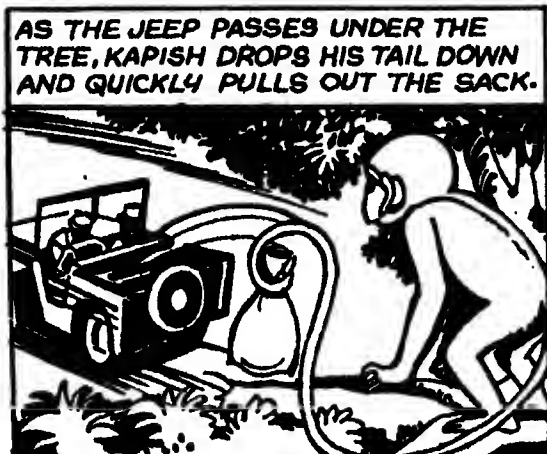
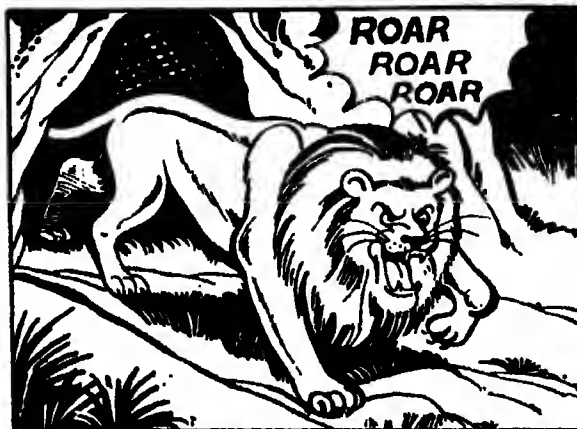
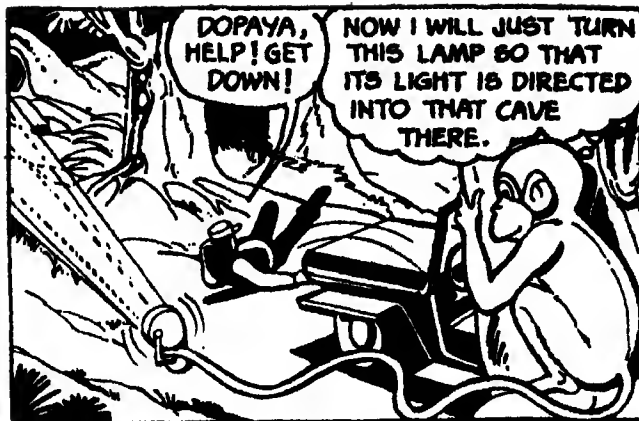
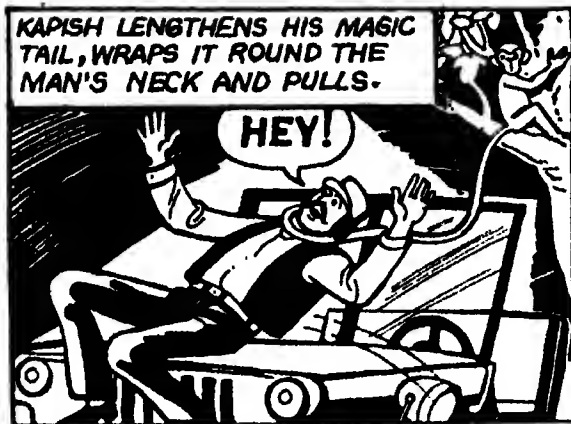


GOOD HEAVENS. IT'S THAT CUNNING DOPAYA AND HIS FRIEND, CATCHING BIRDS.











# COURAGE THY NAME IS BESSAMIR

**T**HE dark night was still. The waters of the river flowed silently and swiftly. High above, on a ravine, a horse neighed.

A small pebble rolled, and the men standing on the ravine glanced down. They were the brave men of Koval who had gathered to give a fight to the Yui-chis—a tribe of cruel, hard-hearted men. As they looked down, they could make out certain dark forms in the distance. Bessamir held a whispered conversation with his men. Bessamir—the hero of many a battle, a household name in the town of Koval. As he gave his instructions, the men withdrew to their respective positions.

The men on horseback moved slowly, so as not to tire themselves out. The Yui-chis were tense, wishing to raid Koval only by night. Casino licked his dry lips. Looking up he couldn't see a thing. Not even the ravine was visible.

The distance was decreasing every moment. Casino and his men spurred up as they neared the ravine. The horses neighed, but were silenced abruptly. The zig-zag path continued. Once or twice Casino thought he heard a low purr, but he was not sure. He looked up suspiciously. Nothing moved up there.

"At last!" said one of the soldiers, as the Yui-chis brought their horses to a halt. Down below lay the town of Koval, silent and still, thought Casino. Ah! the thought of that rich land and its women brought a smile to his lips. And even as he was smiling, horsemen from all sides rushed out on the Yui-chis. The tranquillity of the night was shattered as steel clashed with steel. Bessamir fought like one possessed, his sword whisking away his opponents' heads. The Yui-chis were taken by surprise. Before they had time to gather their thoughts, a fourth of their men had been wiped out.

Casino fought back. He had come determined to capture Koval. His mouth tightened perceptibly as he saw his men losing ground. And then, he did a cunning trick. In the midst of the battle, he slipped out with a hundred of his men on the narrow path to Koval.

The Yui-Chis were routed. As abruptly as it had begun, the battle ended. Bessamir looked around for Casino, but he was nowhere in sight. He looked again. Casino had disappeared. And then, the truth struck him and he was furious, angry at himself. Leaving the Yui-Chi men to his aide's charge, he took some men and started down the narrow path to Koval.

But even as he neared the town, he could hear blast after blast. The whole town was ablaze. Bessamir entered the town and saw the Yui-Chis.

And suddenly, he saw Casino. He too had seen Bessamir. An evil glint shone in his eyes, as he put the woman he was dragging in front of him. Bessamir's face went livid with anger. He advanced on Casino. But he didn't complete his sword stroke. Casino was now taunting and teasing the woman. Bessamir advanced again.

Casino had by then brought his sword out. Their swords clanged above the head of the woman but even as Casino was taking a firm grip on his sword, Bessamir grabbed the girl and whisked her away. Handing her quickly to one of his soldiers, he turned his horse to meet Casino.

A sudden movement and Casino had jumped on to Bessamir's horse. Both struggled now, and the horse rising up threw them both down. Rolling on to the ground, Bessamir picked up the sword and advanced on Casino. His face was a livid mixture of hatred, anger and disgust. He was sure of killing Casino, who had fallen on his knees, begging for mercy. As Bessamir lifted his sword, the treacherous Casino plunged a dagger into Bessamir, a dagger he had concealed cunningly. Bessamir gasped, stared at Casino and lifted his sword in a final act, severing his head. The victory was Koval's at last.

That night the people of Koval prayed for Bessamir—the man who had time and again showed them the meaning of courage and bravery. As they walked back home, they did not realize it was a still night, a dark night, a silent night.

*Pranav Khullar (15) India*

# MAROONED OFF A METEOROID

## THE STORY SO FAR

The scene: Epsilon Eridani, a star system billions and billions of kilometres away from the sun. The wreckage of a spacecraft lies among a debris of rocks. A distress signal brings to it rescuers from another star system.

Cautiously, but enthusiastically because they have sensed the presence of life, the explorers reach the wreckage through virgin darkness. The metallic glow of the spacecraft guides them to the door hatch which lies open.

Contrary to their expectations, the rescue of the living being inside poses no problem. They find him dying, but succeed in reviving him with an energy dose. "Emergency! Armstrong IV calling!

It's an emergency!" he cries out as if from a tape-recorder.

When pacified, the voice heaves a sigh of relief. "I knew aeons ago you'd come. Thank you, my rescuers!"

"How did you reach this star system?"

"When did you come?" The rescuers cannot wait for an answer.

The being then narrates his story: "We were floating in space...collision...Armstrong IV of the Lunar Base Archimedes...on a mission called Jules Verne...a record with me will shed more light on the mission...my captain had given it to me before he died..."

Now read on...

## 2. PROJECT VERNE

A 'CLICK' was heard and the explorers now listened to a voice in an altogether different tone. In the silence of that gloomy wreckage, the sound echoed as if it were of a haunting spirit of prehistoric times. In fact, it was so!

"Around me, as I look out through the porthole, I find the entire jet black space studded with glowing silvery stars. Even the sun now appears to be one of them—trying to escape my notice. Nobody seems to be wanting me. Not even this Eagle I am riding on. It wants me to die here and now. That's why it has entangled me to starve in this abyss of empty universe....

"I am alive only because my computer colleagues assure me that help would soon come. Space Station-X, the nearest one to us, presently between the orbit of Jupiter and Saturn, though several millions of kilometres away, is now our only hope. My colleagues are trying their best to contact it and till our hope lasts there is a zest for living in me. Anyway, whatever be my end I want to keep a record of my disastrous mission, so that the future generation or any alien being, if it ever comes across this marooned spacecraft, would know what it was all about. They should not repeat this mistake....

"My mission, the first stage of the secret

**Project Verne**, originated, if I am not mistaken, on April the tenth 1972. That day the sky was a clear blue over the Montana State of the United States of America, a region of the planet earth. Suddenly, out of nowhere, to the surprise of many inhabitants of that place, a black spot was seen hanging in the sky. Gradually it grew in size.

"It did not take much time for the inhabitants to realise that it was of an irregular shape like that of a stone. Such a huge stone in space is known as a meteoroid. In the space between the planets, such objects are always present. Whenever they come in the path of the earth, or come close to her, she eventually grabs them gravitationally. They fall on the earth in the form of dust particles or small bits called meteorites when 'broken' by the atmosphere of the earth. However, on rare occasions, when they are much larger in size, they fall straight on the ground stamping out anything that lives there. A good example is the meteoroid blast that took place near Tunguska in Siberia. It is said that on June 30, 1908, a huge meteoroid fell in that region producing a crater nearly 40 kilometres in diameter.

"So the fate of the inhabitants of the Montana region hung for hours on that black stone in the sky. One could just imagine how much relief everyone there must have felt when they suddenly found the meteoroid not heading for their doom but bolting away from them. It was indeed a miracle for them. Observations claimed that the meteoroid, which was weighing nearly a thousand tons, approached the earth upto a distance of 1,000 kilometres; thereafter it slipped back into space! By the time this carrier of doom had become household news—flashed over the TV and radio—it had left the scene. It was then receding fast, away into the oblivion of cosmos.

"Indeed, soon the people forgot the guest trip of the meteoroid, but not the astronom-

ers and some others. Much thought was given to it and a lot of paper was written upon. It was eventually analysed that the earth is frequently visited by meteoroids; some narrowly miss it as this one and some makes craters on it as the one in Siberia. Nearly once in every century, such a huge body approaches the earth; it was so numerically calculated. While the military commanders of many nations called a meeting to think of a means to combat such threats from space, the astronomers took the event as a new method of studying astronomy! They thought of landing a spacecraft with instruments on such a meteoroid and allowing it to drift with it.

"The idea was not a novel one, however. A century or two back, one of the pioneers of science fiction, Jules Verne, had written an account of such a space ride, but on a comet, in his novel **Off the Comet**. Whatever that be, the preparations for **Project Verne** began in full swing. It was anticipated that within the second half of the 21st century, a guest meteoroid would again visit the earth. Young men were selected and were trained for this special mission. To my misfortune, I was one of those who volunteered for it. In those days I used to dream that one day I would get on to that meteoroid and would return to the earth as a hero. Now, of course, I repent for fostering such illusions. . . . .

"Oh! I hope I have not bored you with my pessimistic talk I feel I am drifting away too much from this historical mission I want to relate. Let me now not get into the other details. I will come straight to the Verne mission. . . .

"For once the astronomers were proved wrong, and their calculations went awry. The guest meteoroid appeared on the scene much earlier than was anticipated.

*Dilip M. Salwi*

*(To be continued)*

# CAMEL ON THE WALL

THE fire-light threw long dancing shadows on the wall. Alok was sprawled out in the long comfortable easy-chair, watching Uncle Karan light his pipe.

He was on a week's visit to his uncle's forest home. Uncle Karan was a forest-officer and lived all alone for he had never married. He had a very exciting life wherever he had been. Once he was posted in the jungles to the north-east of India. It was then he shot a tiger that had been terrorizing a cluster of villages for years. He had also lived in the thickly vegetated areas of the south and rubbed shoulders with the tribals who lived in the dark interiors. Uncle Karan was very fond of nature and he knew all about animals and plants. He had so much to tell Alok whenever they met.

Today was Alok's first day at Rampur. He had spent the day, going round the plantations with his uncle, watching the villagers about their daily chores. Now it was night and uncle and nephew sat up late over their cups of hot cocoa, watching the shadows.

"It's time for bed," remarked Uncle Karan and stood up to stretch. "You mustn't tire yourself on your first day here. Come, I'll show you to your room."

They went out into the cold dark passage and up the short flight of stairs. It was cold in Alok's room. He shivered as he watched Uncle Karan stoke a smouldering fire in the fireplace. A *real* fire in a fireplace. The kind of thing that people in big cities can only dream about.

A cold dry breeze swept through the cracks in the window. "That's the wind from the desert," Uncle Karan nodded towards the window. "It blows for miles from the west and reaches here to tap on the window."

The fire flared and flickered. It was then that Alok noticed the camel on the wall. It was a little brown wooden carving, so exquisitely made that it made him gasp.

"That..." he pointed a finger towards it.

Uncle Karan followed his gaze. "Yes...it's beautiful, isn't it? It was carved by a tribesman from one of the wandering groups in Rajasthan. He gave it to me...when I was posted in that area.

Alok gazed at it. If he narrowed his eyes, it looked almost real. The wall behind it could be taken for miles of sand, the glow of the fire-light for the strong sunshine beating down mercilessly on the sand.....

He did not even notice his uncle say 'good night' and leave the room. He changed in a daze and lay back in his bed, staring at the camel on the wall. What magic, what adventure in the thought...that this was like so many camels which stepped slowly in their long pilgrimages to and fro, over miles of white sand.

It was early morning. The camels had all woken up before anybody else in the camp. They stood, stamping their clod-feet and snorting in the peculiar way that they always did. In a trice, the young lad was on his feet and running to his baby camel Hira, to pat her clumsily on the flanks and to rub her down with handfuls of soft white sand. She stamped and snorted in pure delight and even reached down to muzzle him with her huge clumsy snout to show her fondness for him.

The tall figure of Amar Singh, swathed in dusty grey lengths of cloth, came up to him.

"Run, boy," he said gruffly, "go and help them load the camels."

The boy gave Hira one last pat and ran off. The group worked swiftly loading all their belongings silently on to the backs of the camels, now settled in rows and securing them for the days' journey ahead.

The sun had appeared over the far-away line of

the sand by the time they started moving. Slowly and steadily, their feet sinking in the thick sand, the caravan moved in a long dark line towards its far-away destination.

"But where are we going?" asked the boy of Amar Singh.

The bloodshot eyes looked back at him over the dust-streaked cloth that covered the rest of the tribesman's face. "Leave it to us elders to decide," he mumbled. "Boys like you should only obey orders."

So the boy spent the hours, spread out on his beloved Hira's back, watching the miles go by. He could still see sand and more sand stretching out for miles ahead when the sun slipped over the horizon and darkness spread down over the earth.

Days and nights passed as the tribe moved on with their camels and their treasures. They would one day go back to their women folk, left behind in their settlement with a few able-bodied tribesmen to guard them from danger.

One dark, cold night, most of the tribesmen had dropped off to sleep around their flickering camp fires. The camels grunted and moved about restlessly. The boy also fell fast asleep to be rudely shaken awake. "Huh?" he asked, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

They surrounded him, their eyes dark and luminous, jabbering all together. But it was Karnal Singh, their leader, who tapped him on the shoulder and said in his deep throaty voice, "You, boy, must go to Asimgarh immediately. Our tribe is in danger.....we have just been warned that bandits are after us. You must take our treasure away to safety on your camel. That is the only way out. We will stay back and fight. Once the danger is over, one of us will come to call you back. Until then, you must stay in Asimgarh...."

The night was dark and cool. A breeze whispered to him of great adventure ahead. He watched as they strapped the bundles containing their most valued possessions on to Hira and helped him clamber on. He rocked up and down as Hira got to her feet.

"Go...go to safety!" they called out to him as he spurred Hira on her way. He turned round to look at the forlorn group growing smaller and farther away.

He met with no danger on the way. After endless days of travelling, he reached the first signs of human settlement on the outskirts of a town. It was night and the shrubs and dry powdery earth cracked as he moved by, leading his camel on. Here he must hide as soon as he found a proper hiding place until someone from the tribe came for him. For days and nights, he camped in a little clump of trees where no one came. He tended his beloved Hira, hunted for food, cooked it over a spluttering crackling fire of twigs, and slept with the box containing the treasures rolled up in a length of cloth under his head.

Then it was that he began to get the uneasy feeling that someone or something was watching him! He would turn round to look and find no one. He began to keep awake at nights. Even Hira began to be agitated and to stamp her feet and start up, nostrils flaring and neck arching. He thought of moving to another hiding place, but a clump of trees as convenient as this one would be difficult to come by in this part of the desert.

Then, one morning, as the boy bent over his morning meal spluttering on the fire, he heard a definite step behind him and whirled around. A tall man stood there, wearing a khaki uniform and high boots. The boy started up and moved back and further back, ready to run. The man motioned to him not to panic.

"Do not be afraid," he said in the local language. "I won't hurt you." He spoke slowly and he had kind eyes and a nice wide smile that made his teeth sparkle. "Tell me," he said softly and cajolingly, "who are you and what are you doing here?"

The boy stared silently. His dark eyes narrowed with sudden fear and he turned to sprint. In a trice, the man had him by the wrists and he struggled silently, his eyes screwing up. "You cannot get away," said the man. "Now supposing you come with me to my home. I'll give you a place to stay, food to eat, a soft bed to sleep in...I will be your friend...."

The boy stared at him in silence. The man let go of his wrists and he rubbed them as he sized up the man. Then, without a word, he turned round to gather his few scattered belongings and caught hold of the rope around Hira's neck. The man smiled.

*Padmini Rao*

*(To be concluded)*

# The Flying Button

FOR the benefit of the magic enthusiasts among my young readers, let me describe here two small but interesting tricks with which the late P.C. Sorcar delighted an audience of children at my place in 1959, on the eve of his third trip to the U.S.A. to attend the International Magic Conference in Boston.

The first trick is called "The Flying Button". Pull out of your pocket four buttons, exactly alike, and place them on the table (or on the floor, as the case may be) and say: "These four buttons were presented to me by a great magician. He told me that one of them has a magic quality of mysteriously flying from one place to another at its own sweet will. He did not tell me which one. But let us try to find out."

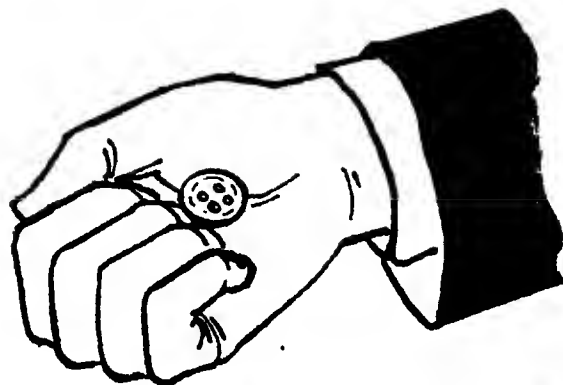
Pick up a button in each hand and close the fists, so that there is a button in each closed fist. Hold both fists, fingers up, and ask someone to place a button on each fist on top of the nails of the two middle fingers. After he does so, you say:

"Now I have two buttons in each hand—one *inside* the fist, and one *outside*. Perhaps one of these two *outside* buttons is the magic button; or one of the two buttons *inside*. Anyway, I shall surprise the outside buttons by taking them *inside*."

Keeping the two fists close together, you suddenly turn the wrists inwards so that the fingers of the closed fists go downward and the back of both your palms are up. In the same sweep, as quickly as possible, drop both buttons (one inside and one outside) from your *right* hand and, slightly opening out the fingers, take the outside button inside the left fist and close it. By very careful practice and private rehearsals you must be able to make these movements in such a way that the *onlookers will think two outside buttons have fallen down* from your hands.

As if apologizing for your clumsiness, you say: "Dear me! The buttons have been too clever for me. Instead of going *in*, they have *fallen down*. But this time I must be cleverer. Would you mind placing the two buttons on my nails again as *before*?"

You show your two closed fists, the finger-side up, before a spectator. This time the fists are farther apart from each other than before. A spectator obliges you by picking up the buttons you have dropped, *apparently* accidentally (but *really* deliberately), and places one on the nails of each closed fist as before.



See how a button is placed on the nails of two fingers of the right hand. Another button is to be placed similarly on the left hand.

Now you actually have two buttons inside the left fist and no button inside the right, but the spectators think there is a button inside each closed fist.

As if to prevent the outside buttons falling down, you raise both fists (no twist of wrists this time) with a sudden upward movement, slightly opening the fingers for a second or so and taking the buttons in.

"How many buttons do I have in each hand?" you ask. The spectators will say, "Two." You open the fists and they will be amazed to find three in the left hand and one in the right! You explain that the magic button must have flown from the right fist to the left one. But as all the buttons are alike, it is not possible to find out *which* is the magic one.

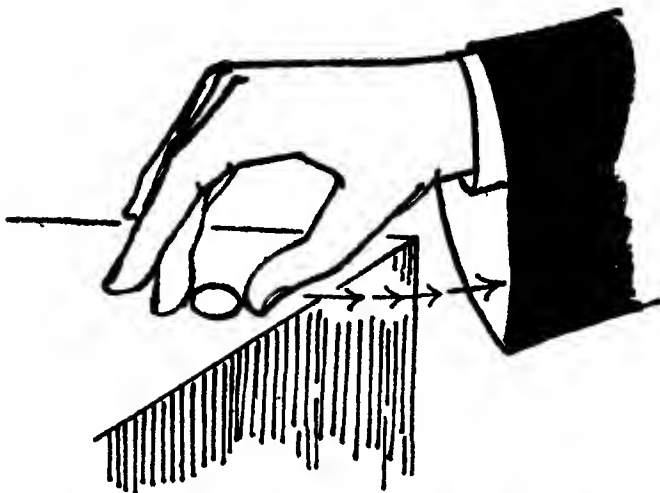
A word of caution: Don't perform this (or any) trick without plenty of practice, and don't repeat it!

From the Flying Button to "The Flying Coin". The magician places a coin near the edge of a table, on which stands a glass tumbler. He picks up the coin with his right hand and puts it into the left hand, which he at once closes on the coin and shows that his right hand is completely empty by showing the palm as well as its back. Drawing attention to his closed left fist by looking at it himself, the magician says that the coin in his left hand is a magic coin capable of passing through a solid matter without making a hole in it.

To prove it, he lifts the glass tumbler by holding it in his right hand with his fingers around the rim, so that the palm of the hand is downward and the back of the palm up. With the left fist he strikes at the bottom of the glass and opens up the fingers so that the bottom of the glass tumbler rests on the left palm. The coin is seen to have passed *into the glass through the solid bottom without making a hole in it!*

The secret is simple. When apparently picking up the coin from the edge of the table, the magician takes care that the sleeve of his coat or 'panjabi' is below the level of the table's edge. While picking the coin he really shoots the coin with the middle finger right into the sleeve and closes the





The coin, lying near the edge of the table, is shot into the sleeve of your coat with the middle finger, in the act of apparently picking up the coin.

finger on the palm immediately, as if holding the coin inside the closed fist. He raises the right fist upward, so that the coin rests in secret inside the sleeve near the elbow.

The magician then pretends he is transferring the coin from the right hand to the left. He closes the left hand into a fist, as if it contains the coin, and at once shows the right hand empty, back and front. As he himself fixes his gaze on the closed left fist, the attention of the spectators is also drawn in that direction. At this opportunity, the magician lowers his right hand, so that the coin hidden in the sleeve falls down into it. With the two middle fingers curling inward, he presses the coin in the middle of the palm and retains the coin in the palm by contracting the muscles on two sides. (This process is called *palming a coin*, and it comes easy with practice.)

When he holds the glass by the rim, the coin lies hidden in the palm and cannot be seen by the spectators. The magician then strikes at the bottom of the glass with his right palm so that it drops down into the glass. The downward movement of the coin and the upward jerk given to the bottom of the glass by the left hand, *apparently* (i.e. as the spectators think) containing the coin, is so simultaneous that nobody can notice the coin actually falling downward, particularly because no one suspects that the coin is in the magician's right palm and as everybody is under the impression that the coin is in his left hand!

Both the Flying Button and the Flying Coin, though simple tricks, are so effective that it was no wonder the children who had gathered in my house that evening 20 years ago sat dazed for a long time even after the wizard had concluded his impromptu show. Did he recall his own wonderment when, as a boy, he saw Ganapati Chakraborti (see 'Children's World', October 1978) exhibiting his 'escape' items? Let me now tell you about them.

# The Flying Coin

The *Illusion Box* was a big wooden box with a lid having locking arrangements. The spectators were allowed to examine the box thoroughly, to satisfy themselves that it was an 'honest' box with no tricks up its sleeves, so to say!

Ganapati's hands were tied securely (or hand-cuffed) behind his back and his legs were tied together near the ankles. In this condition, he was put inside a long sack in the wooden box. The mouth of the sack was then tightly tied. After that the box was shut by putting the lid down, with a captive Ganapati inside, and padlocked. His escape was made more difficult by tying ropes round the box. A *tabla* and *baya* (percussion instruments) were placed on top of the locked and rope-tied box, besides a harmonium and a bell. A non-transparent mosquito-curtain was then lowered to cover the whole box and the musical instruments and the bell completely.

Almost immediately, a hand appeared through the curtain, ringing the bell! As soon as the hand disappeared inside the curtain with the bell, the curtain was raised, to show the bell resting on top of the locked and tied up box. The curtain was once again lowered and someone from the audience loudly called out to the magician inside the box to play a particular *tal* (rhythm)—*Ektal*, *Trital*, *Jhamptal*, *Dadra* etc.—on the *tabla-baya*. (Magician Ganapati, incidentally, was a moderately good *tabla*-player and a singer with a good voice.) At once, the suggested *tal* was heard being played on the *tabla-baya* from inside the curtain. As soon as the *tabla*-playing stopped, the box was once again shown as still securely locked and tied; evidently, the magician was captive inside. How, then had he played on the *tabla-baya*?

The curtain was brought down again, and immediately after, Ganapati was heard (from inside the curtain) playing on the harmonium and singing. When the harmonium playing stopped, the curtain was taken off again, and there was no sign of the harmonium-player and singer! The box was still securely locked and tied. Once again the box was curtained. A moment later, *Ganapati was seen coming out, ringing the bell with his right hand*. Ringing the bell like someone possessed, Ganapati walked round the curtained box once.

Meanwhile, as requested by an assistant of the magician, one of the spectators took off his ring and put it on a finger of the magician, while another tied a marked handkerchief round the magician's wrist, *for later identification*.

Ganapati then disappeared under the curtain, immediately after which the curtain was taken off,



revealing the 'Illusion Box' as securely tied and locked as before. The spectators examined the box from all sides and were satisfied. The spectator who had retained the key came forward and opened the padlock and opened the lid. The mouth of the sack inside the box seemed as securely tied as before. It was untied, and Ganapati was seen in a half-dazed condition, his hands and legs as securely tied as before, *with the two spectators' ring and handkerchief on his finger and wrist!* The whole box was thoroughly examined again and found perfectly intact. It was a wonderful mystery how Ganapati had escaped from captivity inside the box and then gone back to it, and that too so quickly.

It was on November 15, 1931 that I first witnessed the incomparable Ganapati, the inspiring Guru of the great Sorcar, present this illusion on the occasion of a *Magic Competition* (called "Magicians' Kumbhamela") held at an industrial fair near the Sealdah railway station in Calcutta. Eight of the then leading magicians of Bengal, including the unforgettable master artist, Rajah Bose (who had won great success as a professional magician in England during the first decade of the present century) took part in the competition. Ganapati did not participate in the competition, but on special invitation exhibited his illusion to lend extra dignity to the function, for which a special gold medal was awarded to him as a mark of respect. The first prize gold medal was won by Rajah Bose. One of his items was 'The Barrel Illusion', which was as quick as it was mystifying.

In this illusion, a big wooden barrel stood on the stage. Its top opened as a lid, and had a locking arrangement. Rajah Bose's assistant entered the barrel which was just large enough to contain him. The lid was put down over him and locked, and the key of the lock was given to a spectator for safe custody. The magician stood on the barrel, covered himself completely with a sheet of cloth, and then sat down. The next moment, the spectators were amazed to see the *assistant*, whom they had seen

being locked inside the barrel, which had earlier been thoroughly examined by a group of spectators and found to be without any trickery, *standing on the barrel!* He then came down. The spectator who had the key to the barrel opened the lock and raised the lid. Everybody was surprised to find *the magician (Rajah Bose) captive inside the barrel!* The barrel was thoroughly examined by the spectators again, but they found it to be without any trickery.

I did not know the secret then, and the unbelievably quick change of place between the magician and the assistant through the solid top of the locked barrel amazed me, just as it had amazed the whole audience. A few years later, I came in close touch with this great master of magic. He died in 1948 at the age of 62. I heard from him some interesting stories of his magic career. I shall narrate them in one of my later instalments.

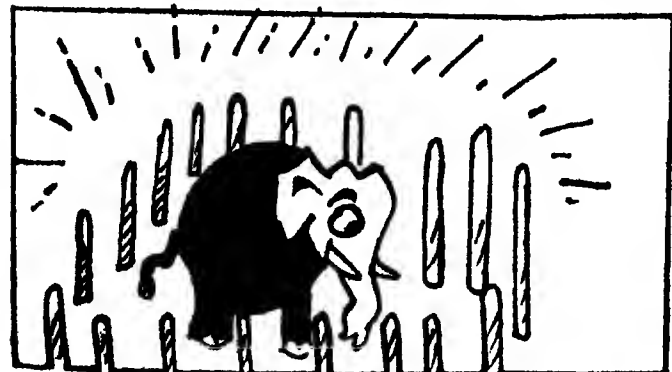
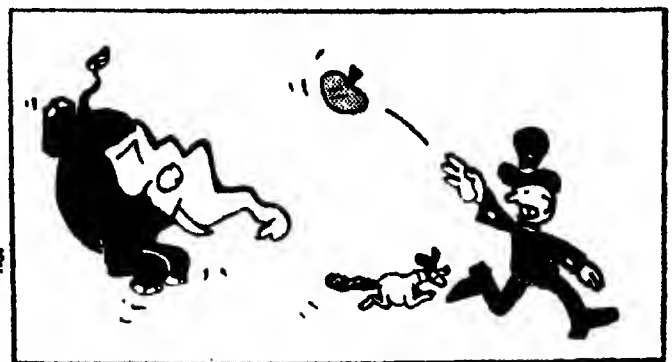
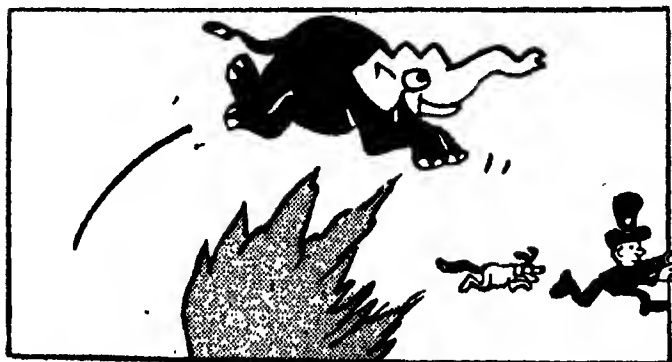
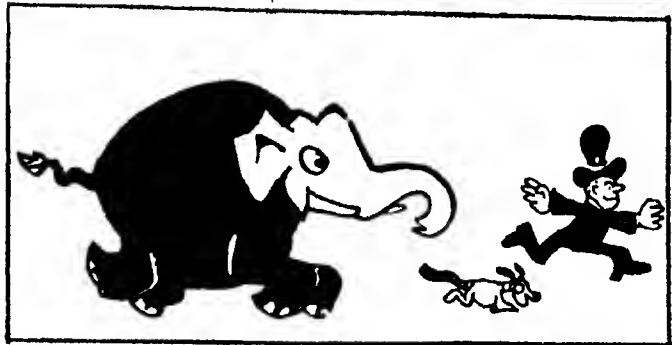
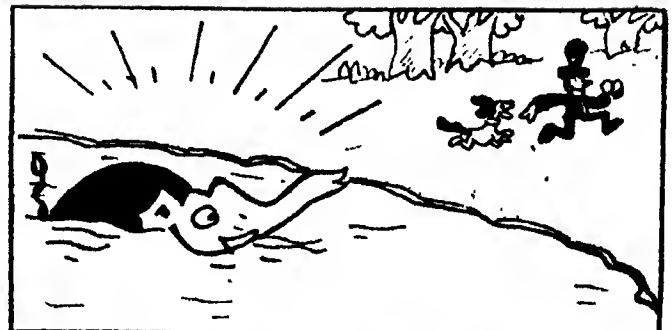
Ganapati's "Illusion Tree" was a vertical wooden frame, somewhat like a cross, fitted with rings. Ganapati, clad in a coat and trousers, was secured to this 'illusion tree' with chains and handcuffs. His ankles were tied securely with a rope to the bottom of the frame, after which he was screened off. Almost immediately after, Ganapati threw out his coat and trousers over the screen. The screen was removed a moment later to reveal Ganapati *in his under-garments*, but still secured to the frame as before by chains and handcuffs and rope! He was screened off again, and his coat and trousers were thrown back to him over the curtain. The next moment, when the curtain was again drawn off, Ganapati was found fully clad in his coat and trousers, still secured as before to the frame! The effect was uncanny, and the superstitious among the spectators believed that these humanly impossible feats were made possible for the mysterious Ganapati by powerful miracle-working spirits under his full control!

Ajit Krishna Basu

(To be continued)



(See facing page)



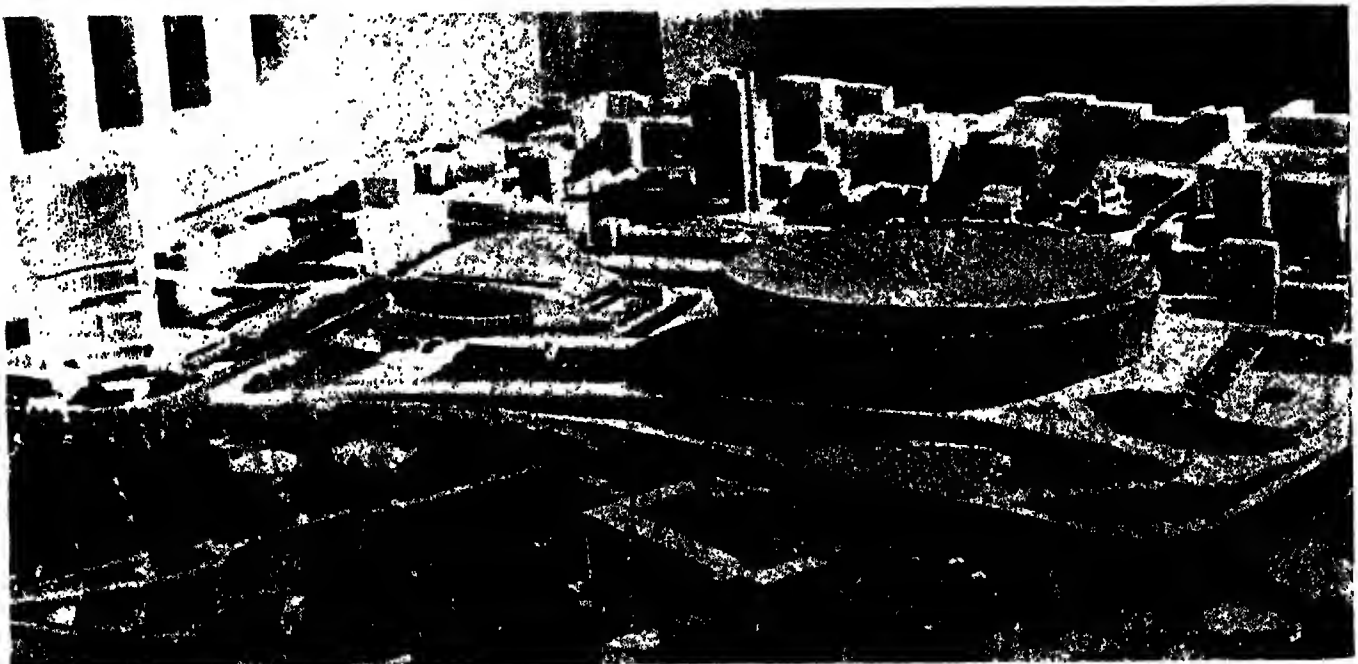


Above: Misha the Olympic mascot. Below: A model of the Olympic complex coming up in Moscow.

# OLYMPIC NEWS

ONE day recently a jet landed at the airport of Minsk, the capital of Soviet Byelorussia. The door opened and a charming bear appeared. It was a real brown bear, much like the 1980 Olympic mascot Misha, designed by artist Victor Chizhikov. Topa (that is the bear's name) wore a belt decorated with the five Olympic rings. He was accompanied by Elvina Podchernikova, his friend and tamer. Topa had gone to Minsk to inspect the Olympic projects there!

Being a football fan, the bear visited first of all the construction site of the Olympic stadium and the Olympic village "Staiki", where the footballers will stay and train. On the football field at the sports centre, Topa played with great pleasure as a standby for the goalie Mikhail Vergienko of the Minsk "Dynamo". Then he watched the training of Olympic springboard divers Vladimir Aleinik and Alexander Kosenkov. A worthy wrestling partner too was at his ser-



vice—Alexander Medved, thrice Olympic champion ("medved" is the Russian for "bear").

A gigantic cake crowned the bear's visit to Minsk. Before Topa said good-bye to the people of Minsk, he invited everybody to the 22nd Olympic Games.

Meanwhile, there is feverish building activity going on in Moscow for the Games. Cranes have become a symbol of the Soviet capital! More than 80 sports and other facilities are either being built anew or modernised for the 1980 Olympiad in 16 districts of Moscow.

The main Lenin Central Stadium in Luzhniky will have 140 different sports facilities. The stadium grounds cover an area of 60 hectares with tens of thousands of trees, hundreds of thousands of shrubs, and millions of flowers. It is expected to cater to 150,000 people every day during the Games—athletes, coaches, officials, tourists, and Soviet sports fans.

Moscow is justly called a city of sport. It has already a total of 5,475 sports premises, including 60 stadiums. The new facilities include the Olympic Village, the largest roofed stadium in Europe to accommodate 45,000 persons, an all-purpose indoor stadium, an equestrian sports complex in Char-

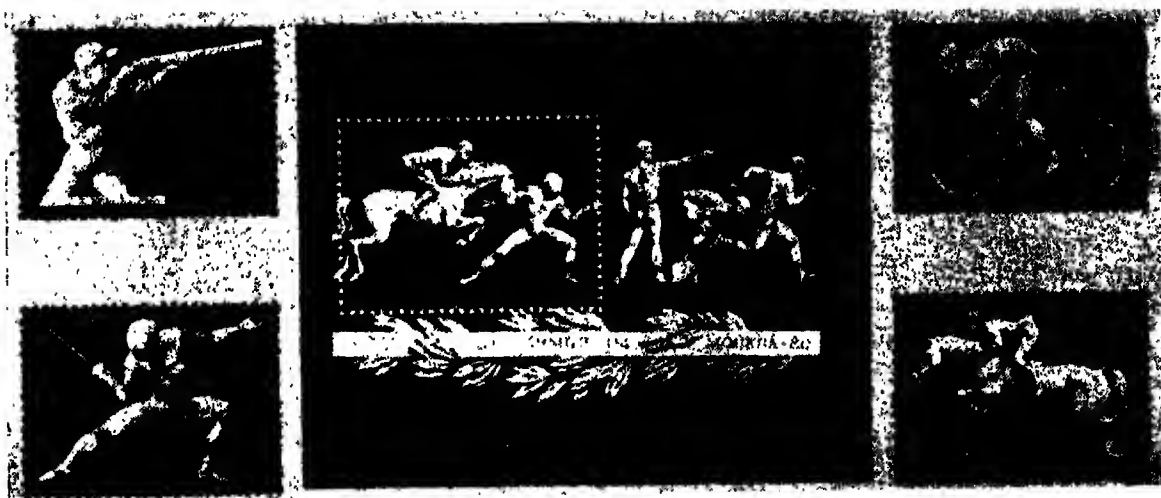


Above: The Olympic bear, Topa, seen in 'action' during his visit to the Olympic football field at Minsk. Below: The IOC President Lord Killanin (facing the camera) at the main Olympic site.

tanovo, an indoor cycle track in Erylatskoye, a swimming pool, the Main Press Centre, hotels, and so on. The total seating capacity of all the Olympic facilities will be 330,000.

The other day, Lord Killanin, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), went on an inspection tour of the Olympic projects under way in Moscow. He was much impressed with the progress of construction of the projects which is much faster than it was in Montreal at the same stage of construction.





The five USSR postage stamps devoted to the 22nd Olympic Games show shooting from a small-bore rifle (10 kopecks), a fencer during a dual (20 kopecks), cycle



racing (4 kopecks), equestrian sport (18 kopecks), and archery (6 kopecks). The series is crowned by a postal sheet (centre) depicting modern pentathlon.

The Olympic village, spread over nearly 110 hectares on the Lenin Hills, not far from the Central Stadium, is fast coming up. Its residential complex will consist of a 16-storey three-sectional building provided with modern facilities and comforts. The Olympic Village will be a whole modern town for 14,000 sportsmen and officials. The village will be opened 21 days before the Olympics and will close a week after the competitions are through.

The Main Press Centre, occupying an area of 23,300 square metres, is coming up on Zubovsky Boulevard in Moscow. About 7,000 members of the Press, radio and TV will be accredited to the 1980 Olympics. The games will attract some 220,000 Soviet and foreign tourists. There will be separate student hostels for 25,000 people.

A ferro-concrete TV tower, the highest in the world, and Europe's largest TV centre are both located in Ostankino, a Moscow suburb. A new television and radio complex is being built near them for serving the 22nd Games. According to an estimate, about 1,500 million people had watched the Montreal Olympics of 1976, of whom 99.95 per cent followed the games on TV. Some ex-

perts say, 2,500 million TV-viewers the world over will be able to see the 1980 Olympic competitions. The Olympic TV and radio complex will broadcast 100 radio programmes and telecast 18-20 colour and black-and-white programmes, most of them at the request of foreign companies that are keen on relaying the Olympic events for their countrymen.

Tallinn, the capital of Soviet Estonia, will host the regatta of the 1980 Games. For this purpose, an Olympic Yachting Centre, on the left bank of river Pirita is coming up.

The games which will be held from July 19 to August 3, will have 203 sets of Olympic medals—an all time high—for sportsmen and women to win in 21 different events.

The traditional Olympic Flame will be brought to the host city in relays, covering a distance of more than 3,000 kilometres. The route will be from Olympia through Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania. The relay run carrying the Flame will start about a month before the official opening of the Games.

*Pritam Lal*

# "THY NEED IS GREATER"

JASON looked at the calendar. One more week to go for his eighth birthday. He wished the days would pass quickly. 'Why can't some fairy come and make time run faster?' he thought.

He had a special reason to be eagerly awaiting this birthday. His mother had promised him a bicycle.

He heard the newspaper landing on the verandah. He went out and picked it up. He did not open it and look at the Sports page





as was his usual practice. Instead, he remained there and watched the paperboy cycling away. Jason admired the tricks the paperboy did on the bicycle. At times, he would even take both his hands off the handle, to pick up the right paper, roll it, and hurl it towards a verandah or a balcony. And he rarely missed his mark.

Jason imagined himself cycling fast. Then he visualised how he would be balancing the cycle with one hand. At other times he thought he would cycle snail-slow, quite a difficult feat to perform. He would swerve and turn, and perform all the acrobatics that he had seen a little girl in a circus do with great ease.

Soon the paperboy turned the corner and disappeared from his view. Jason ran to his mother and gave her the paper. His father was busy at his shave. He waited for his mother to finish glancing at the headlines

and then hand over the paper to him. He would then read his favourite Sports page.

Suddenly, he saw the paper slip out of his mother's hand. He looked up at her and was surprised to see tears in her eyes. He jumped up and went to his mother. "What's the matter, Mamma?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing, my dear, nothing. There is a news item which has upset me."

"What is it? Tell me, Mamma."

"It is about a ten-year-old girl. Her kidneys are damaged. She is gravely ill."





"Kidneys?"

"Yes, kidneys. They are the organs which filter out the waste in our body and throw it out along with the urine. Tonya's kidneys are damaged and they can't separate the waste. It is poisoning her body. She will die unless she uses a kidney machine."

"What will the machine do?" asked Jason.

"The machine does what the kidneys are supposed to do. It will draw out the waste from the body."

"Oh!" Jason felt relieved. "Then why doesn't her father get the machine for her?"

"It's very costly, Jason, and Tonya's father can't afford to buy it," his mother replied.

"Can't we help, Mamma?"

His mother did not reply immediately. She smiled, drew him closer, and hugged him. "Perhaps we can," she said. "The paper is asking its readers to send donations for a fund it has started for buying a kidney machine for Tonya."

"I, too, want to help Tonya, Mamma," Jason said. "How can I, Mamma? I want her to be fit enough to run around and play."

"Good, think of something," his mother said and moved off towards the kitchen. After a while, he followed her. "Mamma, I know how I am going to help Tonya. I'll send money for the fund."

"Money? From where will you get the

money to help Tonya?" his mother asked.

"Make a guess, Mamma," he prodded her.

"I can't," his mother said, without lifting her eyes from the pan she was stirring.

"Remember, Mamma, you once told me the story of Sir Phillip Sydney. That he was lying wounded and was very thirsty. So, one of his men brought a glass of water, and as he was about to take a sip, he heard a soldier moan. He, too, was lying wounded. So Sir Phillip offered the glass of water to him, saying, 'Thy need is greater!'"

"What has that got to do with Tonya?" said his mother, now looking at his face.

"Think, Mamma, think. Then you will know!" There was a gleam in his eyes.

Jason's mother pondered. She wondered what the boy had in mind. "Honestly, dear, I can't make a guess," she said.

"Not enough grey matter—that's what you tell me when I err while making an addition. Now, it is my turn. You don't have enough grey cells!"

His mother laughed. Jason smiled. "Mamma, it's very simple. I will forgo my birthday gift. Let's send the money to Tonya. How do you like the idea, Mamma?"

His mother bent down and patted his check. She said, "So, you are the modern Sir Phillip Sidney, eh, Jason?"

*R. K. Murthi*

## **Children Learn What They Live With**

If a child lives with Ridicule,  
He learns to be Shy.

If a child lives with Encouragement  
He gains Confidence.

If a child lives with Hostility,  
He learns to Fight.

If a child lives with Tolerance,  
He learns to be Patient.

If a child lives with Shame,  
He learns to Feel Guilty.

If a child lives with Criticism,  
He learns to Condemn.

If a child lives with Praise,  
He learns to Appreciate.

If a child lives with Fairness,  
He learns to be Just.

If a child lives with Security,  
He learns to have Faith.

If a child lives with Approval,  
He learns to like Himself.

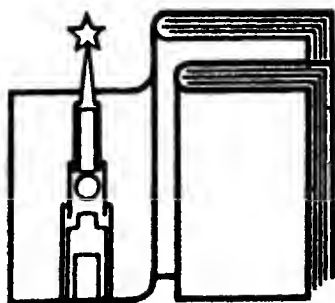
If a child lives with Acceptance and  
Friendship,  
He learns to find Love in the world.

*Abhinav Kapoor (13)  
India*



**CHILDREN'S  
DRAWING COMPETITION OF  
THE 'SOVIET WOMAN' MAGAZINE**

**FOR  
DETAILS  
SEE  
FACING  
PAGE**



**Towards  
International  
Year of the Child**

**СОВЕТСКАЯ ЖЕНЩИНА**

*(Issued by the Cultural Department of the U.S.S.R. Embassy)*

# SMALL WONDER!

**H**AVE you ever seen a lizard's tail lying all by itself on the floor, twisting and turning till it finally lies still? The lizard gazes on unconcerned. And it sure can appear unconcerned because it knows it can grow another tail soon enough.

And that wriggly, slimy creature—the earthworm. We all know that if we cut off a few inches of its body along with the head, it will soon have a new head!

But what beats them all is the starfish. Fish-farmers would remove this pest from oyster and mussel beds, rip them to shreds, and throw the pieces of flesh back into the water. But if they thought *that* was the end of a pest, they *were* mistaken. Because

—and this is for you, too, if you don't know it—the starfish can regrow an entirely new body from a single severed part. So, if the poor fish-farmer thought he had got rid of *one* pest, he now had to deal with several multiplied from that *one*!

But the starfish is not the only sea creature with this curious ability to regrow. On the beach, if a crab gets your toes, breaking its leg might release you from its clutches. But the little fellow will promptly go back and grow another one. Crabs and lobsters both fight a lot of battles because they *know* they can regrow a lost leg or claw.

While on wonders of the sea, ever heard of 'planarians'? Pla-

narians are worms less than an inch long and unfortunately look like leeches. If you cut off a planarian's head, he'll grow a new one; cut off the tail and he'll have a new one. So, *that's* not unusual. But if you cut off a planarian's head in the middle, both parts will grow a head each! Hack it off in several places and the old thing will develop into a monster with ten heads—luckily it'll remain only an inch or so long. Cut off the head *and* the tail, and the planarian will grow a new head *and* a new tail in exactly the same places as before, as though the severed body knew where its head belongs and where its tail should be put.

V.S.

## A NEW COMPETITION FOR YOUNG ARTISTS!

### Dear Children!

The 'Soviet Woman' magazine and the General Board of Directors of International Book Exhibitions announce a Children's Drawing Competition on the theme 'The Hero of My Favourite Book'.

All of you read a lot, but there are books whose heroes are closest to your hearts. Tell us about one of them in **your drawing**. What do you think he looks like? What are the surroundings in which he lives and is active? In what episodes are his best qualities revealed? Think! Give rein to your fantasy! Only please **don't copy drawings** from books! The rules of the competition do not allow this.

Children between 10 and 16 years can participate in this Competition.

Send in your drawings by December 31, 1978 to our address:

'Soviet Woman',  
22, Kuznetsky Most,  
Moscow K-31, USSR.

Please add 'Children's Drawing Competition' on the envelope.

We will publish the best entries in the magazine, and when the Second International Book Fair opens in Moscow in September 1979, they will be displayed there on special stands. The winners of the Competition will receive prizes.

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davp 78/204

# CONGRATULATIONS!

**A** fifteen-year-old girl from Argentina has brought glory to her country. Claudia Magdalena Kalos is the winner of the most coveted prize in Shankar's International Children's Competition 1977—the President of India's Gold Medal. Her portrait of two nuns done in oil has been adjudged the best painting. Argentina secures this highest award for the second time since the inception of the Competition 29 years ago. The award had earlier gone to that country in 1965.

Siddarth Kishore Dev Verman (14 years), a student of the Kendriya Vidyalaya in Agartala (Tripura), has been awarded the Vice President of India's Gold Medal for his written work. It is a 280-line poem called "Memories". This is the seventh time India wins the literary award since 1949. Indian children had won this award in quick succession in 1971 and 1972.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Gold Medals (popularly called the Nehru Awards) have gone to 22 children from 15 countries. They are:

**PAINTING:** Maria Gabriela Aragno (13) of Argentina, David Correll (10) of Australia, Gita Smolkova (12) of Czechoslovakia, Stefan Kley (10) of the G.D.R., Anita Fur (12) of Hungary, Danlatram Saini (15), Rohit Prasad (15) and Roma Malhotra (13) of India. Mami Sawafuji (11), Megumi Ito (15) and Yuriko Uno (9) of Japan, Oh Jung-Hwa (9) of the Republic of Korea, Tung Yu Peng (9) of Malaysia, Barbara Posrednik (12) and Joanna Skonieczek (14) of Poland, Lec Hwec Khim (15) of Singapore, Sajith Priyantha Gunaratna (10) of Sri Lanka, Vutavee Chompooming (14) of Thailand, Olya Zhigan (13) of the USSR, and Maryam Obeed (13) of the United Arab Emirates.

**WRITTEN WORK:** Delia Ruth Paul (14) of Malaysia and Lam Khoi How (11) of Singapore.

A total number of 842 prizes have been won in the 1977 Competition by children in 75 countries. Of these, 768 have been awarded for painting and 74 for written work. The awards include the 24 Gold Medals en-

umerated above, 414 prizes, and 404 Silver Medals.

Indian children have, as usual, won the largest number of prizes—165, including the Vice President's Gold Medal and 3 Nehru Awards. Poland is back in the lead among other countries, with 44 prizes including 2 Nehru Awards. The USSR has won 36 prizes (one Nehru Award), Japan 35 (3 Nehru Awards), the U.S.S.R. 35 prizes (one Nehru Award), Sri Lanka 34 (one Nehru Award), and Argentina 30 prizes (including the President's Gold Medal and one Nehru Award). They are followed by the Republic of Korea 28 prizes (one Nehru Award), Taiwan 28 prizes, Malaysia 26 prizes (2 Nehru Awards), Singapore 25 prizes (2 Nehru Awards), Britain 24 prizes, Hungary 22 prizes (one Nehru Award), and Czechoslovakia 21 prizes (one Nehru Award).

## Highlights of the 1977 Competition

The world-wide popularity of the Competition can be gauged from the regularity with which children have been participating and, as a consequence, they have also been winning prizes consistently. For instance, Carlos Enrique Labarthe of Argentina, who has won a prize for the 12th time in succession since 1966. Another Argentine boy, Hector Mario Carrozzi, had earlier won prizes in 1971, 72, 73, 74 and 1976 capping it with a Nehru Award. Patricia Marta Borgolio, also of Argentina, has a string of 6 prizes from 1971, missing one only in 1973.

Barbara Posrednik of Poland, who wins a Nehru Award in 1977, has had successes every year from 1968, except 1972. Another Polish girl, Barbara Bogiel, was a winner in 1970, 71, 73, 74, 75, and 1976. Dorota Weilgus, also from Poland, had successes in 1969, 72, 73, 74 and 1976.

For Chueng Tac-Ik of the Republic of Korea, the 1977 Competition has brought a prize for the 6th time.

Dadan Gandara of Indonesia began with a Nehru Award in 1972 and followed it up with prizes in 1973, 74 and 1975.

In Iraq, Tagrid Yahya Al Buhrizi has been winning prizes every year since 1972, except in 1974.

In India, Sudha Reddy of Hyderabad has kept up her record of wins since 1968.

This International Children's Competition was first organised by the SHANKAR'S WEEKLY in 1949. It was taken over by the Children's Book Trust in 1962. The 1977

Competition attracted nearly 150,000 entries from over 110 countries.

The 1978 Competition offers a larger number of Gold Medals and has the added attraction of the Gold Medallists between 10 and 16 years of age being invited to Delhi to receive their prizes in person—as a tribute to the International Year of the Child. Detailed rules appear elsewhere in this issue.

## THE FASTEST IN THE

THE word 'fast' prefixed to motor car, train or aeroplane always gives you a thrill. How will you react to 'fastest' then? The Soviet supersonic airliner TU-144 is presently the **fastest** plane you can think of. It averages a speed of 2,000 km per hour (Mach 1.9 or 1,245 miles per hour) when it carries passengers. It is said that the aircraft reached a speed of 2,550 km (Mach 2.4 or 1,585 mph) during its test flights. The British-French 'Concorde', it has been claimed, can also attain a speed of 2,330 km (Mach 2.2 or 1,450 mph). However, the very fastest aircraft is the French operational bomber **Dassault Mirage IV**, which can fly at a speed of Mach 2.5.

FROM bomber to destroyer. It is again to the credit of the French destroyer **Le Terrible**, which attained the maximum speed of 45.02 knots (83 km or 52 mph). She is no longer in the active list!

AMONG submarines, the US Navy's Los Angeles class of vessels "do" 30-plus-knots easily, and can attain speeds described "dramatically higher".

AND among passenger ships, the **United States** (38,200 gross tons) averages 35.60 knots (maximum possible 41.75 knots) or 41 m/ 66 km per hour.

THEY put a rocket engine to a 4-wheeled land vehicle, **The Blue Flame**, and when driven by Gary Gabclich on Bonneville Salt Flats, on Oct. 23, 1970 it roared to a speed of 1016 km/ 631 miles per hour. At a particular moment, it was calculated, the racing car even went up to 650 mph—the highest speed for any wheeled land vehicle.

FOR motor cycles, the fastest speed is claimed by **Dunstall Kawasaki**: 222 km/ 138 miles per hour.

IF we turn to wheeled vehicles on rails, the fastest service comes from Japan's Osaka-Okayama train which runs on an average 166 km (103 miles) per hour. The "attainable peak" has been calculated at 256 km (160 miles) per hour. The train is hauled by electric traction.

THE world record, however, is to the credit of a US research vehicle, which ran on a test track at 377 km (234 miles) per hour in 1974.

FOR steam locomotives, a British engine reached 202 km (126 miles) per hour in 1938. Would you be surprised to know that the engine was badly damaged after the run?

*(Next month: The Slowest in the World)*

# SHANKAR'S

## INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S COMPETITION 1978

### Rules

Children all over the world can participate in Shankar's International Children's Competition 1978. Only children below 16, i. e., those born on or after January 1, 1963, can participate in the Competition.

Each entry should be accompanied by a certificate from the parent/guardian or teacher that it is the original and unaided work of the competitor during 1978.

Each entry should carry the following details. These must be written in BLOCK LETTERS and in ENGLISH, on the back of the painting or at the end of the written work, as the case may be :

- i) Full name of the competitor
- ii) Full address
- iii) Date of birth
- iv) Nationality
- v) Whether boy or girl
- vi) Subject/Title of the entry

Entries which do not carry these details will not be considered.

- Entries by more than one competitor can be sent together.
- Entries should be addressed to :

Shankar's International Children's Competition  
Nehru House  
4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
New Delhi 110002  
India

1. Entries should reach the above address on or before December 31, 1978. Competitors from countries other than India are advised to despatch their entries well in advance to allow sufficient time for transit by surface mail.
2. Entries will NOT be returned.

#### Paintings/Drawings

1. Paintings or drawings may be done in any media, except black lead pencil.
2. The size of the painting or drawing should NOT BE LESS than 30 cm x 40 cm ( 12" x 16").
3. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries. They must be sent unmounted.
4. Paintings or drawings may be on any subject the competitor has seen or is interested in.

13. Combined work will not be accepted.

#### Written Work

14. Only entries in ENGLISH will be considered.
15. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries.
16. Entries may be in the form of essays, short stories, poems, plays, descriptive writings, etc.
17. The written work may be on any subject the competitor has seen or is interested in.

#### Prizes

18. The award of prizes will be decided by the organisers of the Competition with the help of a panel of judges.
19. The painting or drawing adjudged the best will be awarded the President of India's Gold Medal. The Vice-President of India's Gold Medal will be given for the best written work. Besides the above, it is proposed to award 48 gold medals, including 24 Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Gold Medals, and over 400 prizes and 400 Silver Medals for the next best entries. All paintings selected for the Shankar's International Children's Art Exhibition will receive Certificates of Merit.

As 1979 is to be celebrated as International Year of the Child, the organisers also propose to invite the top prizewinners between 10 and 16 years of age from different countries to receive their prizes in person at the Prize Distribution function to be held in Delhi in November 1979. Their passage and stay expenses will be met by the organisers.

20. No competitor will be awarded more than 2 prizes.
21. The copyright of all entries will rest with the Shankar's International Children's Competition.
22. Among paintings, all those which win prizes other than Silver Medals, and among written entries, all those awarded prizes and a few winning Silver Medals will be published in "Shankar's Children's Art Number Volume 30". Some selected entries will also be published in the "Children's World".
23. All competitors can get "Shankar's Children's Art Number Volume 30" at half-price. (Rs. 15 for competitors from India only). Any competitor can reserve a copy.

NOTE: Vol. 30 is expected to be ready for mailing in December 1979.



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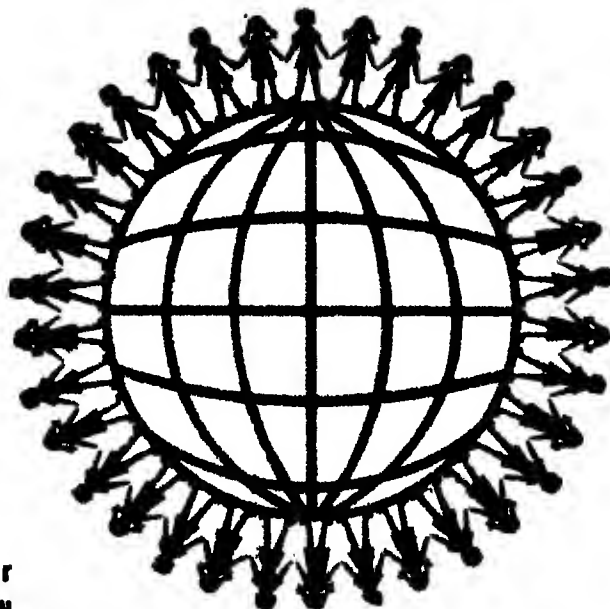
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# CHILDREN'S World

PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH  
DECEMBER 1978 VOL. XI NO. 9



Chief Editor  
SHANKAR

Editor  
K. RAMAKRISHNAN

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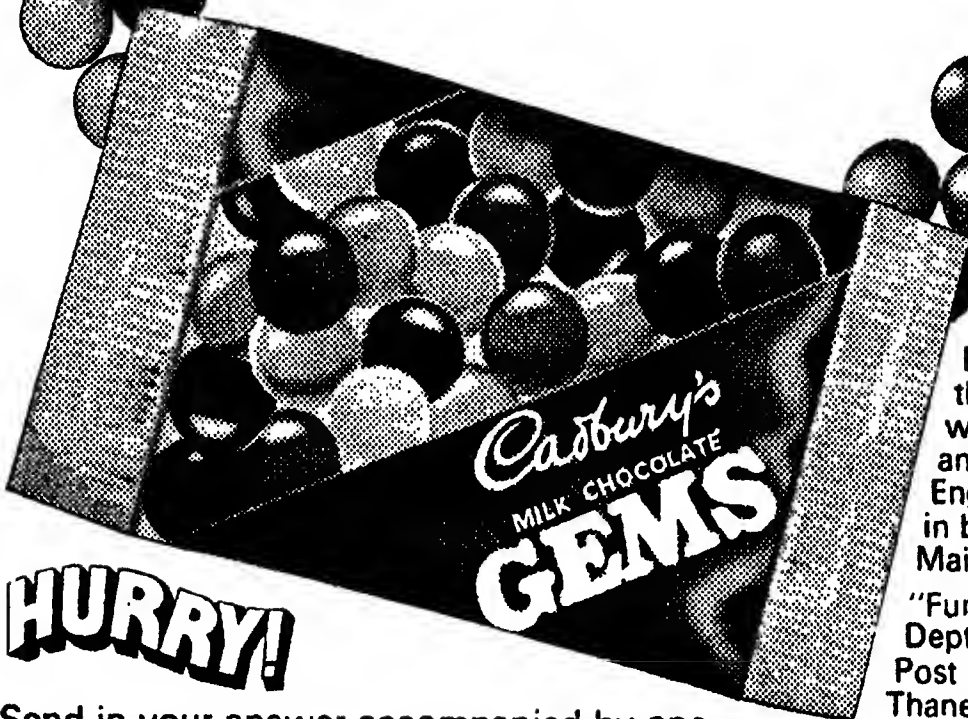
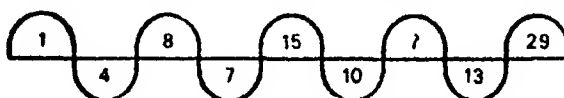
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# FUN WITH GEMS

## 1001 LUCKY PRIZES TO BE WON

What is the missing number?



### HURRY!

Send in your answer accompanied by one empty large (30 g.) plastic packet of Cadbury's Gems. The first 1001 successful entrants will each get a State Bank Gift Cheque for Rs 11

Please write the answer, as well as your name and address, in English only, and in block letters  
Mail entries to:

"Fun with Gems",  
Dept. E-24  
Post Box No. 56,  
Thane 400 601,  
Maharashtra.

Last date for receiving entries:  
12th January, 1979

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CHILDREN'S WORLD

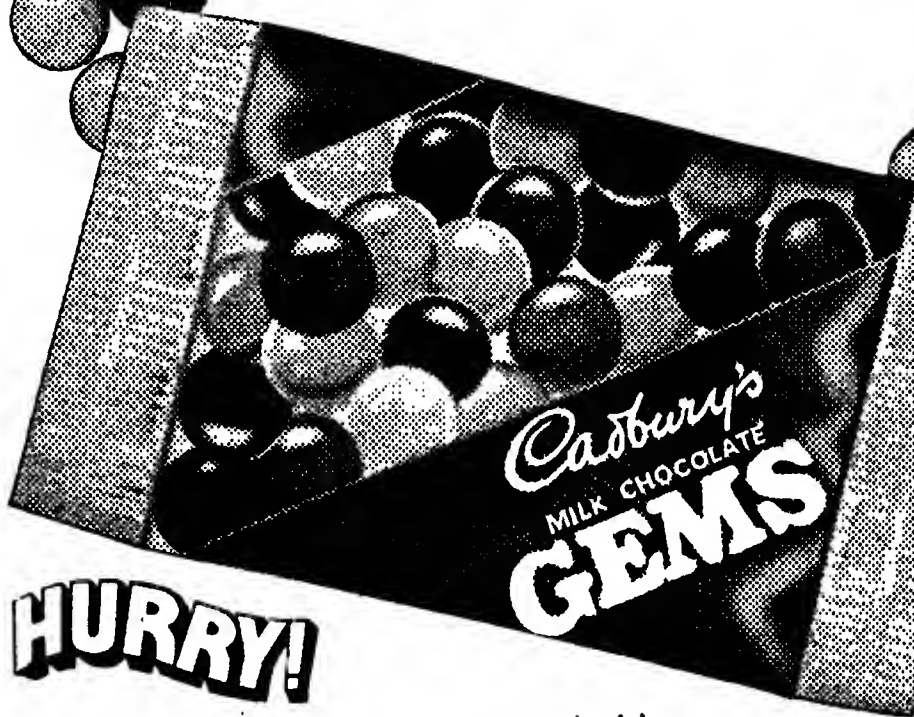
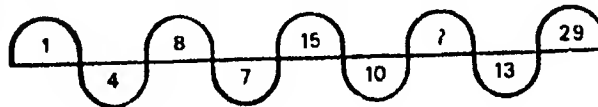
**A MERRY XMAS  
TO ALL OUR  
READERS**

**(Turn to page 5 for Christmas Features)**

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CHILDREN'S WORLD



**A MERRY XMAS  
TO ALL OUR  
READERS**

**(Turn to page 5 for Christmas Features)**

# Someone...

"Who knocks at the door?"

"I"

"Are you fair?"

"Are you merry?"

"Are you gay?"

"Who are you?"

"I am fair

"I am merry

"I am gay—

"I am 'someone'."

*Chhavi Kumar (12)*  
*India*





TRUE STORY

## A Xmas Surprise

MICHAEL LORENZ pressed his nose hard against the glass of the show window of the Hartmann Department store. His eyes were shining as bright as the electric candles of the Christmas tree behind the glass, as he stared at the wonderful things hanging from its branches and the toys lying scattered all over the floor. There was an electric train, a slide, roller and ice skates, football boots, pistols and guns, bicycles and scooters, stuffed animals and dolls of all sizes. Everything was wonderful, but the best of all was the electric train with its tiny black engine that huffed and puffed up a small hill, raced through a small tunnel with its many bogies trailing behind. It was fantastic—just the train he had always wanted, the train his father had promised him for Christmas.

"Michael," his father had said to him, "next Christmas I will buy you an electric train." And with a teasing smile he had added, "But only if you are a good boy."

Michael Lorenz had been a good boy.

He brushed and polished his and his mother's shoes every morning. He made his bed every day and tidied his room. He watered the flowers and put the potatoes for boiling an hour before his mother returned. He always finished his homework before running down to play with his friends, or strolled by himself through the main shopping centre in its Christmas beauty.

Michael sighed deeply. No, he would not get an electric train for Christmas, nor roller skates, nor football boots. He would not get any toy. For, his father had died six months ago, when the big gas cylinder of the Franz Ohde A G exploded. It killed three workers and Paul Lorenz, the Works Engineer. A hot knot formed inside Michael's throat. It sat there hurting him, nearly choking him. He coughed and wiped away the tears that welled up in his eyes, rolling down his frost-bitten cheeks.

Papa! If only he would be here! He would take him by his hand, would talk to him! Then Michael Lorenz would be happy even

without electric trains, without cars, or roller skates and a slide. He sighed once again, and left the show window and scanned the next one for a present for his mother.

There were wonderful coats with fur trimmings, hats with lovely feathers, long dresses of silk with silver flowers embroidered all over them. Everything was so incredibly beautiful, that for the second time that freezing December afternoon, Michael Lorenz pressed his red nose against the window of the big Department store. He gazed at all the scarves, shoes, and handbags in admiration. But, when his eyes fell on the price tags, his heart sank. He knew he could not afford a single one of them. All he had been able to save were five Marks and sixty Pfennings. It seemed a lot, yet so little.

With a heavy heart, Michael walked past the rest of the show windows and entered the store. He strolled past the stalls with Christmas chocolates, cookies, and sweets. He looked at them longingly, gripping his money tightly in his hand. Then he went over to the giant Christmas tree. He pushed along with the crowd, the hundreds of people who bought sweaters and socks, toys, perfumes, and Christmas cards. He pushed on till he came to a stand with artificial jewellery. There he stopped and stared at the sparkling and shining necklaces hanging all in a row. Oh, they were beautiful, they were magnificent. Michael knew that his mother would love one of them. But they looked so expensive. They would definitely cost more than five Marks and sixty Pfennings. He looked at them longingly and touched them softly with his fingertips. There were blue ones, and light green, and a pink one with little golden beads.

"Yes," asked the sales girl, with a friendly smile. "Do you want to buy one?"

Michael Lorenz nodded and blushed. "I would like to buy one for my mother. But aren't they very expensive?"

"Expensive?" asked the girl. "No, not really. Some cost only ten Marks. Some are even cheaper."

"Ten Marks?" cried Michael, "that much! All I have is five Marks sixty Pfennings."

The sales girl looked down at him, looked into his small pale face flushed with nervous excitement. His small lips, blue from the cold, trembled slightly.

"Which one would you like for your mother?" she asked with an encouraging smile.

"The pink one," whispered Michael. "This is the most beautiful one."

The sales girl reached over and pulled the pink and golden necklace off the stand. As she looked down at the price tag, she sighed and gave a small cry. "Oh, my, what a pity. It costs eight Marks."

Michael looked at her and then down at his fist with five Marks and sixty Pfennings. His deep blue eyes slowly filled with tears as he dropped his head, his lips trembling, and looked down at his boots. Then he turned round and was just about to leave when he felt a hand on his shoulder.

He looked up into the friendly face of the sales girl as she said in a soft voice. "You like this one very much, don't you?"

Michael Lorenz nodded silently.

"Look," she went on, "I'll give you one Mark and forty Pfennings so that you can buy the necklace for your mother. All right?"

Michael stared at the girl aghast, looked into her friendly eyes full of understanding.

"Oh, no, no, no," he whispered. "I cannot accept it."

"Of course, you can accept it," replied the girl cheerfully. "I would like you to take it. It is not much really; such a small amount. I am sure your mother will like it. It is the best necklace of them all."

And while she chatted on, her hands were busy packing the pink and golden necklace into fine Christmas paper. After

dropping it into a small plastic bag, she handed it over with the bill.

Michael Lorenz counted the money into her palm and looked up at her with shining eyes. "Thank you, madam," he said. "You are very kind. Happy Christmas to you."

And he rushed past the busy shopping people, out into the crisp and wonderful winter air.

Christmas Day came, the day he had longed for most, a day more beautiful than a summer holiday or even his birthday. The day when his father had spent many hours behind the locked door of the drawing room, when he heard the faint tingle of Christmas bells and the soft rustle of wrapping paper, while his mother was cooking in the kitchen, preparing delicious cookies and sweets and the Christmas goose for dinner.

This year there was only a very tiny Christmas tree, which he himself had decorated while his mother busied herself in the kitchen.

They did play a number of Christmas records and nibbled at Christmas chocolates.

Finally, the moment came when they lit the candles on the tree and sang "Silent night".

Tears filled their eyes, as they remembered the many joyful Christmas as of years ago.

"Don't cry, Michael, my son," said his mother, and stroked his blond hair. "I know it is difficult without Daddy, but we will make it together, you and me. Forgive me for not being able to buy many Christmas presents for you, but I will try to give you more next year. Look, here is a ski pull-over, warm gloves, and a pair of warm trousers. I am afraid there is no electric train, as promised by your father. Maybe I will be able to buy it next year for you."

"Oh, no, Mother, no," cried Michael with wet eyes. "These things are more than I

deserve. See, all I could buy for you is this little present. But I hope you will like it."

He pulled the only present he had for his mother out of his pocket.

Mrs. Lorenz opened the little parcel with trembling hands and, as she finally opened it out, she gazed down at the pink and golden necklace and then into her son's face. Her eyes filled with warmth and affection as she pulled him into her arms and whispered, "This is the most beautiful necklace I have ever seen."

And sitting close together on the sofa, watching the candle grow shorter, they suddenly heard the shuffle of heavy boots in front of the door. They listened. Who was coming on Christmas eve?

Michael looked at his mother questioningly.

"Silence," whispered Mrs. Lorenz.

The bell rang; it rang three times.

For a moment Michael Lorenz and his mother sat still. Then Mrs. Lorenz rose, straightened her dress, and went to open the door.

"Happy Christmas, happy Christmas," boomed a heavy voice.

Michael jumped to his feet and raced through the drawing room. Hesitantly he looked from behind the door at a tall, white-bearded man, clad in a red mantle and heavy black boots.

Father Christmas! He had come!

Michael could not believe his eyes.

"Merry Christmas, merry Christmas," repeated the man. "May I come in?"

"Of course, please," beckoned Mrs. Lorenz, while Michael just nodded his head.

The tall man entered the hall and turned to Michael with a warm smile.

"Ah, and you are Michael, the boy who polishes his shoes every morning. Haven't you come first in the mathematics test? I know, I know everything. And since you

arc such a good boy, I have something very special for you. Come and open the bag."

But Michael Lorenz just stood and stared at Father Christmas, who indeed seemed to know everything.

Father Christmas emptied the bag on the floor, and parcel after parcel rolled out over the carpet. Oh, there were so many, many.

Michael Lorenz stared at them, he just could not believe it. Were they all for him? With shaking hands he bent down to open the first one, then the second, and then the third. He found a pistol, and roller skates, a motor car and an electric train.

With a cry of joy, he fell on his knees and unpacked the tiny rails, bogies, and a shining black engine. He forgot everything around him, his mother and the tall Father Christmas, who took Mrs. Lorenz's hand and said softly, "This is for you, dear Mrs. Lorenz. Please accept the contents of this letter from the Personnel Department of the Franz Ohde A G. Please allow us, his col-

leagues and friends, to bring a moment of happiness to the one who misses him most. Don't say anything. Just try and have a happy Christmas."

And before Mrs. Lorenz was able to reply, he pressed a heavy envelope into her hand, turned and closed the door softly behind him, and was gone.

With trembling hands Mrs. Lorenz opened the envelope. Tears sprang into her eyes, as she saw the bundle of notes, tightly held together with a red Christmas ribbon. But she wiped her tears away, as she turned to her little son crouching on the floor.

"Look, Mother," he cried, "look! I have got an electric train from Father Christmas. It's just the one I wanted. It is so wonderful. It's unbelievable. Oh, Mummy, I think, Daddy must have told him that I wanted it. Daddy must have sent Father Christmas to me."

"Yes," answered Mrs. Lorenz very softly, "your Daddy has sent him to you."

*Sigrun Srivastava*

## BEAUTY ALL AROUND

Oh! Did you ever pause  
and listen to the little  
gushing and gurgling spring;  
And see the sun above, glittering?  
Oh! Did you ever pause and gaze  
at the wide, green and lushy meadows  
with cows and calves, so cute;  
And the simple cowherd playing his  
cane-flute?  
Oh! How I wish I could leave this city  
and join the innocent villagers  
with Nature all around me;  
Everything so fresh and untiring to see!

*K. R. Suresh Kumar  
India*

## WINTER MORNING

Morning came bringing freshness,  
The world wearing a dress of loveliness,  
In the little sunlight the trees glow,  
The fields powered with fresh snow,  
The birds also start singing,  
They are also greeting the morning.  
The chilly winter winds blow  
O'er the lively, soft snow  
Everything glitters in the sunbeam,  
Oh! it all looks like a dream  
A white carpet spread over the fields  
The leaves glitter like beads.

*Alpana Ansal  
India*



## **'Comic' Characters**

Casper is a little ghost;  
Don't panic, he is friendly.  
His friend is the good little witch.  
And her name is Wendy.  
Wendy and Casper are generous  
And kind too,  
They'll go out of their way to  
Be nice and help you.  
Casper and Wendy are my best,  
But Spooky is a pest.  
Donald Duck is funny,  
And Scrooge has too much money.  
Dennis is so naughty,  
He irritates Mr. Wilson, an old  
Man of forty.  
Sylvester is a nut.  
He never catches Tweety but.  
Melvin loves Audrey,  
He always meets her cordially.  
Richie is so rich,  
To get his money, people itch.  
Archie flirts and flirts,  
He loves girls who wear mini-skirts.  
But I still say  
That Casper is my best  
And Spooky is a pest!



*Radhika Sonia Bhalotra (11)  
India*



# OH! TO BE IN ENGLAND!



THE play over, we walked out of the cosy and comfortable theatre on to Piccadilly Circus. A thick blanket of fog nuzzled against us. The neon lights flickered in the dark. It was cold and wet, and as the whistling wind hit against our faces, I felt I was shaking. It was not the cold making me do so, but my mother's hand.

"Seven o'clock. Time to wake up for school," she said impatiently, while I snuggled deeper under the quilt in an effort to drown her voice.

However, my quilt was rudely snatched away from me and I was left shivering, though wide awake! Rubbing my eyes, I remembered I was not in Delhi anymore and my dream was a reality that had taken place the previous night. We had been to see Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" at London's Aldwych Theatre.

It was just a few weeks since we had left Delhi and my old school. Now, I was actually going to a "Phoren" school and what is more, it was nearing Christmas time. At last I would get an opportunity to see this festival being celebrated in its true spirit.

As though to reassure myself of these facts, I jumped out of bed the same instant and looked out of the window.

It was a typical English morning. There was a slight drizzle; the sky was overcast, with "very few chances of it clearing up during the day" — or so the weather-man on the "Beeb" (the affectionate term used for Radio 1, BBC) reported.

Radio 1 broadcast only 'Pop' music and all twenty-four hours as well. This was heaven for me, because I would now be able to get all my friends in Delhi green with envy! Surprisingly, I even managed to dress for school without a fuss and polish my shoes to the rhythm of the guitar.

Then came the best part of the day. An English breakfast! And this meant much more than toast and milk. The English weather must have done wonders to my appetite, for I demolished fried eggs, bacon and sausages without batting an eyelid, and washed it all down with orange juice and coffee.

Luckily, the transport system in London is excellent, so one never had to worry about getting late on that account. Beautiful, bright, red and yellow double-decker buses ply the streets of London at regular intervals. Besides these, there are underground trains (also known as tubes), which carry commuters to any and every part of the English capital, within minutes.

Waiting for the train at the station, I observed various kinds of people in this bustling city. It was the rush hour and they walked briskly; some with newspapers tucked under their arms; some carrying brief-cases and umbrellas, girls in hotpants adjusting their false eyelashes to please the boss, and numerous school boys and girls, all like rabbits bolting into a warren.

Going to school was not a drudgery anymore, although we spent eight hours there. For, unlike school in Delhi, we devoted far more time to extra-curricular activities, such as music, dancing, gym, tennis, rounders, domestic science, and so on. Our teachers were friendly and did not expect us to be bookworms entirely.

We were also provided lunch by the school. That day being exactly a week before school closed for Christmas, we were given a special lunch. This was the treat I had been waiting for — a 'propah' Christmas Dinner as it was called.

We were served the best cooked turkey that I have ever tasted. Along with it there was cranberry sauce, roast potatoes, and green vegetables, followed by some delicious Christmas pudding. I was sorry we did not get a bigger helping! Soon after, we

received a beautifully decorated cracker each. These we broke traditionally, by crossing our arms and pulling each cracker open with the help of a girl on either side. The crackers burst simultaneously, showering mint chocolates over our tables. A perfect end to a perfect meal. And as we rose to leave, everyone burst forth into carol singing.

By the time I left school it was dark. Winter in England means short days and extremely long nights. However, with all that food within me, I was quite happy wandering about the shops before returning home. Besides, I was eager to see the Christmas decorations on Oxford Street — which is a shopper's delight. 'Selfridges', one of the better known department stores, with roughly fifty show windows, had displayed scenes from "Alice in Wonderland". The characters, especially Alice and the Mad-Hatter, stood out so well that, for a moment, I thought they were real!

It was late and I had to be back in time for the Christmas specials on the TV, but I could not resist buying some freshly roasted chestnuts, before I hopped on to the bus that took me home.

Watching this fascinating city from the top of a doubledecker bus was far more appealing than travelling underground.

"If you are tired of London," said Johnson, "you are tired of life."

That night I certainly was tired, but not of London.

*Navkala Singh*

## XMAS IS FOR CHILDREN

Christmas is essentially the children's day. Its specially religious significance can, of course, never be lost, but it is doubtful if its spiritual influence would be so widespread but for the myth of Kris Kringle. It invests the festival with all the strength and eternal vitality of the purest and most powerful sentiment of which humanity is capable. Christmas Day can become wearisome and monotonous only when childhood, with its infinite variety, becomes wearisome and monotonous.

*The Globe, Toronto  
December 24, 1892*

# THE CHRISTMAS GIFT



**"HEY, Jim, wait a moment,"** a young voice called out loudly.

Jim halted and turned round. There was a rush of sturdy feet and Dick tumbled in front of him. His round, wheatish-coloured face, twinkling blue eyes, and sharp nose, raised enquiringly at him.

"Any luck?" he asked breathlessly, as they both continued their walk to school. Jim, a few inches taller, was also a year older to Dick, who was nine. They lived in the same colony, nearly a hundred flats, all a glaring yellow.

"Now, you know Uncle Tony," Jim explained. "He is a mean old man. I was so good, and you know how difficult that is for me."

Dick nodded his head wisely in agreement. They were both quite accustomed to be told: "Children should only be seen and not heard". Jim had followed the saying, but it seemed a futile effort. He continued, "He left yesterday and did not give me any present. Not even a rupee. So, I still have only ten rupees. What about you, Dick?"

"No luck. I have only eight rupees." Dick kicked at the stone in front of him.

Jim halted in his tracks and asked accusingly, "But you had ten the other day. What happened to the other two rupees?"

Dick looked down shamefacedly. "I bought marbles with them," he said.

"Well, it ain't much use saving from our pocket-money, if you aren't going to be serious with our plan," said Jim reprovingly.

"I won't do it again, promise," Dick tried to pacify his friend. "If only we had thought of it before."

Jim nodded in agreement. Only last month they had seen the model of a ship in 'Khurana Stores'. The price tag said thirty-five rupees. The boys had then decided they would jointly buy the ship as a Christmas gift. Since they were cousins and always exchanged presents, they decided that, instead of spending money on each other this year, they would pool in their savings and buy a gift together. But, it was already the end of November, and they were still short of seventeen rupees. Each of them received two rupees as pocket-money every week. So, even if they saved every paisa of it, their combined savings would add up to only twelve rupees. Christmas being three weeks away, they still had time to think of some means to raise money.

"Let's go and see the model again this evening, after school," said Dick eagerly.

Two earnest faces were pressed against the huge glass window of Khurana Stores later that evening.

The salesman caught sight of their grubby faces and hastened towards them. "Hey, you two, step away from that glass!" Quickly, he scrubbed the fingermarks they had made on the glass and said, "This is the third time I've caught you looking in here. Hope you aren't planning to steal that model." He eyed them both suspiciously.

Jim's sensitive face grew hot with anger. "Man, if I were as tall as you, I would have socked your face for making such a false accusation. We were only admiring that ship and," he looked up triumphantly at the dark face towering above him, "we intend buying that for Christmas."

"And have you the money?" the man asked slyly.

The boys shuffled their feet and looked away.

"Yes, we'll have it," quipped in Dick defiantly.

"Run along, I've other customers to see to." The salesman called out to the receding figures, "See you on Christmas Eve."

The words hung ominously between them.

"We must prove him wrong," said Jim a little later. "Look, Dick, see if you can make some extra money. I'll also think of something." Thoughtfully the cousins parted, Dick to the first floor and Jim to the ground floor.

"Is that you, Jim?" his mother called out cheerfully from the kitchen. "Wash your hands and face and come and eat something."

At the dining table, she said casually, "Jimmy, would you do me a favour, please."

Jim looked suspiciously at his mother. He hoped she did not want him to go to the grocer's. It would mean crossing 'Khurana Stores', and he had no intention of meeting the salesman there again.

"Like what?" he asked.

"Nothing much. Aunt Alice wants some help with collecting gifts for the Christmas 'mela', and she was wondering if you would mind earning some money that way," replied his mother.

"Whoopee," sang out Jim. "Can I go now?"

His mother was surprised to see his eager face. Her son had never liked doing an extra chore, especially for Mrs. Williams. She was seventy years old, cranky, miserly, and extremely rude.

"Well, you can go rightaway. Take Dick with you. But don't annoy her," she said, looking doubtfully at his thin face.

"Oh, Ma, we are not that bad," sang out Jim as he ran out to call Dick.

If Aunt Alice was surprised at the children's acquiescence to her erratic and constant demands, she kept her feelings to herself. She never liked little boys, but as the days flew by, she was grateful

to their willing feet. To and fro they went and collected items from various families. The jumbo sale was a collection of goods which were somewhat new but useless to their owners. These were to be sold later at throwaway prices and the proceeds of the sale were to go to the St. Mary's Orphanage.

By the end of the third week, the two had earned three rupees each.

"She is really mean!" exclaimed Dick as he counted Aunt Alice's fifty paise coins. "We should have got at least five rupees each."

Jim sat on the grass beside him. He was diligently counting his collection of one rupee notes. "Ten, eleven, twelve... eighteen and twenty-five paise. How much have you in all?" he asked his cousin.

Dick's face puckered in thought. "I think fifteen rupees and fifty paise," he answered.

Jim calculated fast. That made the grand total thirty-three rupees and seventy-five paise. They were still short of a little more than a rupee. Suddenly he saw Father Alexander come round the corner. "Good evening, Father," he called out.

"Good evening, son," said Father. "And what are you two doing all by yourselves?" He knew the boys were a constant source of worry to their parents. They were forever getting into trouble. He wondered what their latest escapade was.

"Father," replied Jim, "may we help in decorating the church for Christmas?"

Father Alexander was taken aback. Then his calm face broke into a smile. "Now, that was just what I had expected from both of you. Such good Christian thoughts. Come over tomorrow morning and evening. We have only two more days to Christmas and the Church must be made ready for the midnight Mass."

At the end of the second evening, Father Alexander asked, "Now, what would you two like as a gift for all the hard work you have put in?" His eyes twinkled as he studied the two anxious faces.

"Father, can you give us just a rupee each?" asked Jim anxiously.

This was the second time Father Alexander was taken by surprise. He knew there must have been something serious behind their eagerness to help! He frowned as he asked, "You don't owe money to anyone, do you?"

"No, Father," the two voices spoke in unison.

Father gave a sigh of relief. "Here you are, and don't get into trouble."

The two boys ran all the way home. Later, in Jim's room, they closed the door and jumped on to his bed.

"When shall we go shopping?" asked Dick.

"Shush! Mother will hear. It will be a surprise for them, too. After Mass, tomorrow, when all our relatives get together, we will slip out and do our shopping. It won't take us more than twenty minutes."

But it was easier said than done. Not only did the various guests call out to them continuously, but they insisted on being kissed for the gifts given to them. If Jim was free, Dick was in demand! The boys saw the afternoon give way to the evening. They were desperate. Suppose the ship had already been sold?

At last they got their opportunity.

"Jim," his mother called him to the kitchen, "be a good son and get me a tin of coffee. We seem to have run out of it."

Promptly, the two boys left, their pockets full of money.

"Oh boy, I thought we would never make it," said Dick, skipping by Jim's side. "Hurry up, or we might be late."

They savoured a last look at the model in the showcase before going inside.

"May we see the model over there?" Jim asked the salesman.

The salesman eyed them doubtfully. "Have you enough money?" he asked.

The boys showed him their bulging pockets.

"OK, but be careful. Until you pay the bill, don't touch the sails."

Reverently they admired the clean grey lines of the model. It looked bigger and better when it was taken out of the showcase.

"We have to buy the coffee first," whispered Jim. "Look, here," he turned to the salesman, "I've to get something for my mother, and then we'll come back for the ship. You won't sell it till then, will you?"

"I'll wait for only half-an-hour," replied the salesman.

The boys hurried towards the grocer's. At last the ship would be theirs. Their long awaited wish was coming true. They both intended joining the merchant navy when they grew up.

At the grocer's, a big crowd stood before the counter. Impatiently they waited for their turn.

Suddenly Dick said, "Jim, see those two children?"

Even as Jim turned round, a shrill cry rose as a heavy voice threatened, "Get out of the way!"

and a tall man shoved the youngest urchin aside. The boy fell down on the ground.

Pity arose in Jim's mind. Poor boy, he looked far worse now. His clothes were splashed with mud.

Quickly Jim bought the coffee and the two boys stepped out. Immediately a voice cried out: "Paisa do, baba."

Jim knew it was the urchin. His steps faltered. The boy was crying for food.

Turning to Jim, Dick said, "Look, he is crying."

Jim looked at the ragged figures and asked, "Why are you crying?"

The boy raised his torn shirt and, patting his stomach, said, "No food."

An hour later they silently crept by Khurana Stores. The showcase was empty. The salesman stood on the steps.

"Sorry, son, the ship was sold ten minutes ago."

"It doesn't matter," replied Jim. "We will buy another model next year."

Quickly they walked back home. There was joy in their hearts. They had fed the two dirty urchins at a 'dhaba' close by, and given them a rupee each for the next day.

A church bell chimed in the distance.

"Mother will be angry," said Jim, "but it doesn't matter."

They recollected the happy and satisfied faces of the two small boys whom they had just left.

"Jim, do you remember what Father said at the end of the sermon this morning?" asked Dick.

"Yes," replied Jim. "He who serves the poor, serves God."

*Pramilla Bharat Singh*

## MERRY CHRISTMAS

There was a man called Creene,  
who by nature was extremely mean.  
The mere sight of his neighbours feeling glad  
made him jealous and sad.  
Don't ask me the reason for his plight,  
maybe his head was not screwed on right.  
One day when Christmas was nigh  
he decided to steal all the gifts and watch the people cry.  
So on Christmas eve, according to the wicked plan,  
he piled all the goodies into his van  
and dragged the load up a hill:  
There, all the contents down into the valley he did spill.  
But on Christmas day everyone was full of hope and cheer,  
The ringing church bells he could clearly hear.  
Even though he had stolen away all the gifts they had  
how is it, Creene wondered, the people were so joyous and glad?  
He thought, and he thought, and he thought,  
The more he thought the more puzzled he got.  
It struck him, maybe Christmas is a little bit more  
than what you can buy from a store.  
Suddenly his face lit up with a smile,  
which left his heart without guile.  
He exclaimed in pure joy, "Now I know, I know  
Christmas is a lot more than what you can buy from a store."

*Shiv Dhawan*



**“How do you like  
my new watch ?**

**How do you think I got it ? A birthday  
present ? No. A reward for getting 100  
in maths ? No. I bought it through my  
own savings at UCOBANK. Yes friend,  
you too can *open* an account with  
UCOBANK. It's so simple. They're such  
friendly people. And so helpful!”**



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# "IT'S THE SPIRIT..."

**B**ECKY is my best friend. She helped me with all our Diwali decorations, so I had promised I would help her and Aunty with their Christmas preparations.

Christmas was three days away and all the kids of the Services Enclave had planned various parties and entertainments for our parents and for ourselves. Every evening we would meet in Uncle Berry's backyard, and his sister, Sister Cecelia, a retired school teacher, would teach us carols. This was our best guarded secret. On Christmas Eve, the nine of us planned to sing lustily all these carols that we were learning and we wanted to sound good.

During the day, I would be in Becky's house along with Sabina, Renu, Chitra, and Pinky beating eggs, mixing flour, peeling almonds, doing just about everything to get Aunty Weikfield's two dozen and more cakes under way.

The kitchen was overcrowded, so we had made a temporary pantry on the balcony. In the warmth of the December sun, we busied ourselves with big aprons tied round our waists. We giggled and chatted more than we rolled the pastry, or beat the

eggs, but Aunty said we were a great help. And it was such fun licking all those dishes after the cake batter had been poured into the moulds. If we'd done that in my house, Mummy would have banished us and my sis would have called us dirty pigs!

Aunty came in bearing a tray of small steaming mugs of coffee and tiny mince-pies. "Coffee-break, ladies," she said. That's what's so nice about Aunty Weikfield. She knows a kid's voracious appetite, and she knows how to treat girls like ladies.

Dusting my floury hands, I picked up a pie and a mug of coffee, when a shower of pebbles came hurtling through space. One struck my cheek and I didn't wait for more.

"Sunny, you nincompoop!" I screamed, leaning over the balcony railing. "You, two-piece hit.... you...."

Aunty interrupted me. "Sunny beta, Bobby is not at home, he's out biking somewhere. And haven't I told you, Sunny, that till Christmas is over, you are not to throw pebbles in my balcony, no matter what the rules of your Secret Club?"



"I'm sorry, Aunty," came that creep's voice. "If Bobby comes back rightaway, just tell him to join us at the Club with his air-gun."

"You're *not* going to shoot any birds, are you?" Aunty asked.

We girls just sniggered. "What else can that brother of mine think of?" said Pinky of Sunny.

Aunty bent over the railing again. "What mischief are you boys planning now?" she asked.

"No mischief, Aunty," replied Guru, who is actually Gureharan Singh. "Sister Cecelia wants us to help her with something and she's promised us 24 Archie comics in return."

"Twenty-four Archie comics!" exclaimed Becky. "What's this that you boys can do and get paid in comics and we can't? We're also coming along. I'm sure Sister Cecelia would like us to help, too."

"You sissies keep out of this," replied Sunny angrily. "If Sister Cecelia had wanted your help, she would have asked for it."

"And don't you dare follow us," called Guru. "Our waterpistols are itching for some action." And with that, they mounted their bikes and rode away, to be joined round the corner by Bobby.

Immediately there was an uproar in Aunty Weikfield's balcony. We girls were very indignant that Sister Cecelia had not asked us to do her special Christmas chores. After all, we girls took the carol singing more seriously than the boys did. She could have at least *told* us last evening what chores she was telling the boys.

All of us were screaming and shouting, while our coffee got cold. At last Aunty said exasperatedly, "Why don't you girls finish your coffee and the work that you had begun, and go down and ask Cecelia what it's all about? Ream, Rebecca, Renu, come on, girls, cheer up and get to work."

Never had we girls been so quiet and worked so fast. I pounded the pastry flour that I was kneading till it was soft as silk, and Aunty called enough. Becky had beaten the eggs to stiff white peaks.

"All right, girls," said Aunty at last. "You've been absolute gems, now go down and ask Cecelia why she's been so partial to the boys."

We didn't wait to be told again, but mounted our bikes and away we rode.

"Sister Cecelia, Sister Cecelia! Why're you giving Sunny and Guru twenty-four comics? Why didn't you tell *us* to do your work for you?" We cried in an angry chorus when we reached Uncle Berry's house.

"What is this?" Sister Cecelia asked in her school

marm voice. "An invasion from the moon? Why can't you girls talk one at a time?"

"You promised the boys twenty-four Archie comics in return for something they are doing for you," I said when the others fell quiet. "And now they are crowing their heads off — showing off."

"Ream," said Sister Cecelia, "Sunny came here and asked me whether I wanted any partridges for the Christmas dinner, and I said yes, I'd love them, and asked him where he was going to get them for me. So Guru told me that last night an uncle of his had come back with twelve partridges somebody had presented him with. His mother had refused to cook them and when Guru asked me, I was only too glad to accept. He refused money and I promised him the comics. Now, are you girls satisfied?"

"There's something wrong somewhere, Sister Cecelia. I don't think there are any partridges in Guru's house. I think Sunny and Guru have gone to shoot some," said Pinky very thoughtfully.

"What makes you think so, Pinky?" asked Sister Cecelia gravely. "This is very serious; we must stop the boys."

We all knew how fond Sunny and Guru and Bobby were of using their air-guns. Surrounding the Services Enclave was a wild enough jungle with plenty of quails and partridges.

"I'm sorry the boys are doing something rash," said Sister Cecelia after a moment's thought. "They must be stopped. Come on, girls, on your bikes."

So we all got on our bikes. I took Becky double-seat while Sister Cecelia borrowed hers. Pedalling fast, we reached the crumbling ruins where the boys had their hideout. We recognised their board — **BRAVE BOYS SECRET SOCIETY**. We were all panting hard, but Sister Cecelia called out in a very musical voice, "Yoo hoo, Sunny, come my child. Gooroo, Bob, may we come in please?"

That made the three of them charge out.

"Who gave you sissies permission to prowl around here?" asked Bobby angrily.

"Sister Cecelia!" exclaimed Sunny. "What's brought *you* here?"

"Something very, very serious, my boys," replied Sister Cecelia. "These girls tell me, Guru, that you have no partridges at home and that you boys are going to shoot some for me. Please, please, boys, don't do anything of the sort."

The boys were kicking up mud with their gola shoes concentrating very hard on the ground. Aha

caught you, we girls exchanged looks. But the boys just looked indignant.

"These girls, Sister Cecelia, are big, fat busy-bodies. They've been tying aprons and acting important for a week now. We just asked them to bake us a cake and they refused. So, we thought we'd wake them up a bit, and make them feel jealous," said that horrid Bobby.

As though we were going to feel jealous of those creeps. "Huh!" I said. And Renu, Chitra, Becky, Pinky, and Sabina turned their noses up at them.

"My uncle has brought partridges, Sister Cecelia, and you'll do my mother a favour if you accept them. And you can tell these namby-pambys, when we've finished with the comics, they can have the left-overs," said Guru condescendingly.

We let out yells of protest, but Sister Cecelia waved her hands frantically to stop any 'boys versus girls' rough-and-tough that might follow.

"You impossible little people," she said indulgently, "you are all coming back with me for a slice of the cake that caused the controversy. Come along now. Sunny son, do you think I can ride double-seat with you?"

We burst out laughing when Sister Cecelia took

a short run and gathering her skirts seated herself on Sunny's moving bike. Racing with each other, we reached Uncle Berry's house.

"Come in, children," said Sister Cecelia, and we trooped in, dusty feet and all.

In the dining room, Sister Cecelia took out from the side-board the largest Christmas cake we'd seen.

"But you can't possibly eat *that*," I protested, as the big bread knife sank into it.

"And why not, Ream?" asked Sister Cecelia.

"It's three more days to Christmas, Sister Cecelia. You can't eat that cake today," I said.

"Yes, you shouldn't, Sister Cecelia," said Sunny. "And not to worry, we'll share it with you on Christmas Day, anyway."

"Son," said Sister Cecelia, cutting the cake in thick slices. "It's the spirit of Christmas, it kind of gets you, and you feel it's Christmas, so tuck in and a Merry Christmas to you all!"

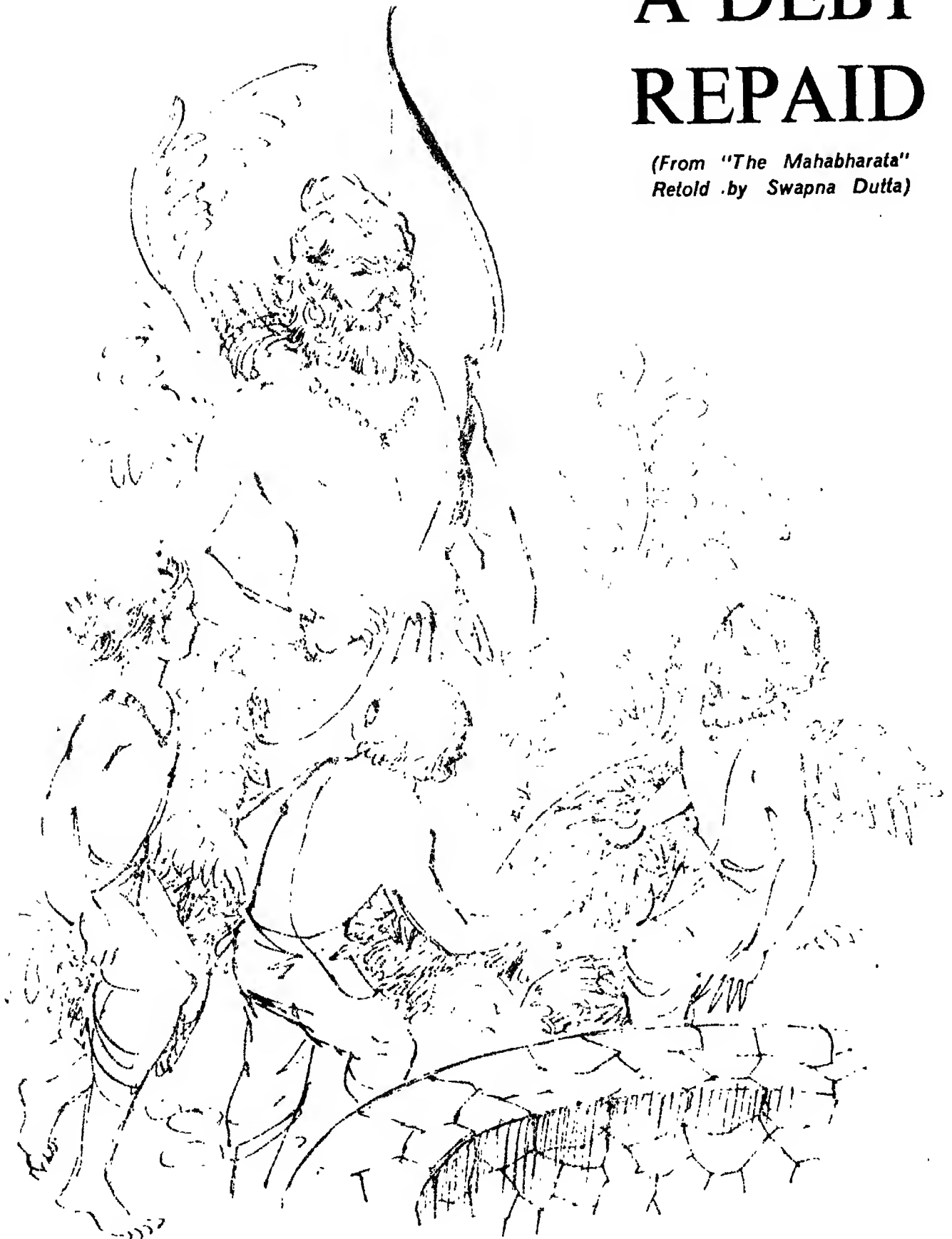
So, with one accord, we picked up a slice each of that curranty Christmas cake and shouted in chorus Sister Cecelia's favourite phrase "God Bless You".

*Vaijayanti Savant*



# A DEBT REPAID

*(From "The Mahabharata"  
Retold by Swapna Dutta)*



**“WHAT** on earth shall we do now?”

“The well isn’t particularly deep, but the ball has fallen right in!”

“So, that means the end of our game!”

The young princes peered into the well, all speaking together. The black water down below reflected their faces. The ball floated across the water—just irritatingly out of reach! “I wish I could fish it out!” said Arjuna. “It will spoil our game, if we don’t.”

“Do you suppose I could dive for it?” suggested Bhishma.

“Don’t be silly!” said Duryodhana, tossing his head contemptuously. “Who would pull you out of the well if you did? Haven’t you noticed how slippery the wall of the well is?”

“It won’t help matters if we quarrel,” said Yudhishtira, the eldest of the princes and the acknowledged peacemaker of the family.

Suddenly there was the sound of laughter. The laughter of a grown-up man, apparently amused! The young princes turned round to look. Who could possibly be laughing at them? Surely not Bhishma, their revered grand uncle? He never laughed at them!

It was a stranger. A man with greying hair and a long grey beard. He was tall and erect, impressive and imposing to look at. He laughed his ringing laugh once again. “Shame on you, young Princes! Shame on you!” he said. “Aren’t you Kshatriyas? Yet unable to achieve a simple thing like this?”

“Simple, sir?” said Arjuna looking at the stranger keenly. “You call it a simple thing to pick up that ball?”

“Very simple,” said the stranger.

“Easier said than done!” said Duryodhana in a sarcastic voice.

“What will you give me if I brought it up for you?” said the stranger.

“Anything that you say,” said Yudhishtira promptly.

The stranger pulled out his bow and a sheaf of arrows. The first arrow hit the ball and in a trice the stranger held it in his hand. “There you are!” he said, tossing the ball to Duryodhana.

The princes stared at him in wonder. “Surprised?” said the stranger laughing. “Well, this is nothing! Watch me now.” He took off his ring and threw it into the well. He then took his bow and arrow and brought it out of the well, just as he had brought out the ball. It was really wonderful!

“What would you like us to give you, sir?” asked Yudhishtira, remembering his promise.

“Just this. Go to Bhishma, your grand uncle, and tell him what you have just seen. I shall wait here, under this tree, till he comes to me.”

“Comes to you?” said Duryodhana in a disbelieving voice. “Grand Uncle will send for you if at all he wishes to see you, which I doubt very much! I shouldn’t think he has time for tramps!”

“Duryodhana, mind your words,” said Yudhishtira in a disapproving voice. “We shall do as you

say, sir. So, do be kind enough to wait here.”

The stranger sat beneath the tree, while the princes rushed to the palace to tell Bhishma about the strange man. Bhishma sprang up from his seat as soon as he heard of the incident. “Where is he? Where have you left him? Take me to him at once!” he said.

“Why, Grand Uncle, do you know who he is?” asked Arjuna in surprise.

“It must be Dronacharya, the great sage-warrior. He alone is capable of such feats!” said Bhishma in an excited voice, his eyes shining.

“Dronacharya!” cried the princes in awe.

“Yes, and if only I can detain him here, your fortunes are made, my boys!” said Bhishma.

“Is he a greater warrior than Kripacharya, our teacher?” asked Arjuna.

“The very greatest,” said Bhishma in a firm voice. “Ever since my own teacher, Parasurama, has given him all his own weapons, Dronacharya has been rendered invincible!”

“And will he teach us?” cried Arjuna in an eager voice.

“I shall request him. If he does, I shall have nothing more to worry about you,” said Bhishma.

Dronacharya was still sitting by the tree when Bhishma reached him, followed by the princes. The two great warriors embraced each other and Bhishma gave him an eager invitation to stay on at the palace and teach the young princes to become warriors. Dronacharya gladly agreed and said he had come to Hastinapura with this very aim in view.

“I shall teach you with all my heart,” said Dronacharya looking at the eager, young faces around him. “I shall give you my very best. But once that is done and you are ready, I shall ask for something in return. Will you give it to me, boys?”

“I will,” said Arjuna promptly, “I will do anything that you ask of me.”

“Bravo!” said Dronacharya, embracing him. “Spoken like a true Kshatriya! I shall not forget it, Arjuna.”

Dronacharya felt from that very moment that there was something special about Arjuna. Not only because he had spoken up as he did. There was an air of sincerity, dedication, and concentration about him which spoke of the true warrior in him. Dronacharya looked at him, knowing instinctively that he would be the one to profit most from his teaching.

His instinct turned out to be absolutely right. Arjuna grasped everything before the others had even heard Dronacharya properly. He soaked every detail like a sponge, missing nothing. Dronacharya felt a wave of delight and satisfaction as he saw Arjuna fast acquiring the skill he himself possessed.

Apart from the Pandava and the Kaurava princes, a few others also came to learn from Dronacharya. But no one could hold a candle to Arjuna—or so it seemed to Dronacharya. Amongst the aspirants, there was a ‘nishada’ lad named Ekalavya,

who also wanted to become a pupil of Dronacharya. But Drona refused to teach him, being hardpressed for time. Moreover, he did not feel it worthwhile to waste his time on a 'nishada' lad.

Dronacharya tried several methods to test his pupils. Once he allowed himself to be attacked by a fierce alligator and cried for help. He could have easily killed it himself, but he wanted to test the princes' presence of mind. While all the others looked at each other in dismay, Arjuna took out his weapons in a flash. In a moment the alligator was reduced to a cut-up heap of flesh! Dronacharya embraced him fondly and blessed him.

Another day, Dronacharya wanted to test their power of concentration. Placing a wooden bird on a tree far beyond, he asked the princes to aim at it. Yudhishtira was the first to try.

"What do you see?" asked Drona.

"I see the bird, the tree, and all of you," said Yudhishtira.

"You're no good," said Dronacharya in a dis-

gusted voice. "Stand aside and let the next one try."

No one was able to satisfy Drona. At last it was Arjuna's turn. "What do you see, Arjuna?" asked his teacher, looking at him critically.

"Just the bird," replied Arjuna.

"The whole of it?" asked Drona, delighted.

"No, only the head," said Arjuna.

"Shoot," ordered Drona. The bird lay at his feet before he had finished speaking.

"You've learnt it!" cried Dronacharya joyfully.

"You're ready now!"

"Ready for what?" asked Arjuna curiously.

"For repaying the debt you all owe me—your 'Guru dakshina', in fact!"

"What is it?" asked Arjuna eagerly. "It is yours for the asking!"

"I'll tell you about it presently," said Dronacharya.

*(To be continued)*

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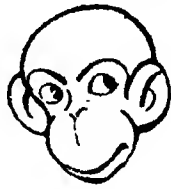
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# KAPISH

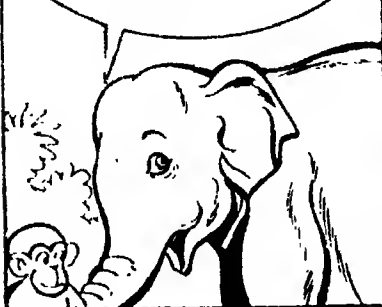


● ANANT PAI  
● MOHANDAS

KAPISH AND BUNDILA ARE PLAYING ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE JUNGLE.



HE MUST HAVE GONE DOWN TO THE VILLAGE TO STEAL SOME SUGAR-CANE.



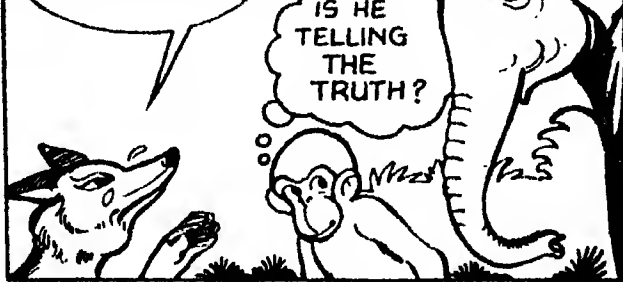
WHEN SIGAL SEES KAPISH AND BUNDILA, HIS EYES BECOME MOIST AND TEARS ROLL DOWN HIS CHEEKS.



YOUR FRIEND PANJA. I SAW HIM FALLING INTO A FARMYARD DOWN THERE.

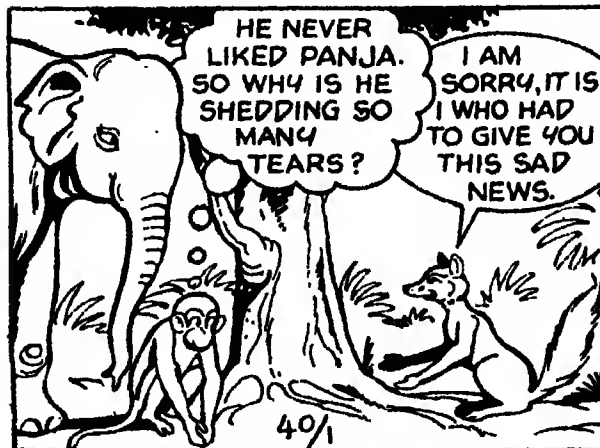


HE MUST'VE GOT A SUNSTROKE OR SOMETHING. FELL LIKE A STONE.



HE NEVER LIKED PANJA. SO WHY IS HE SHEDDING SO MANY TEARS?

I AM SORRY, IT IS I WHO HAD TO GIVE YOU THIS SAD NEWS.

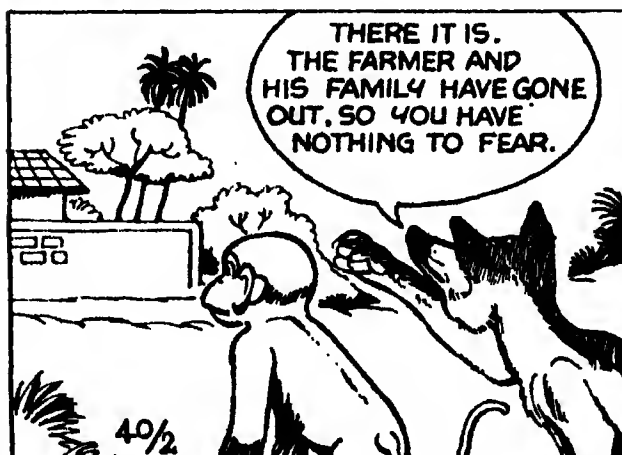
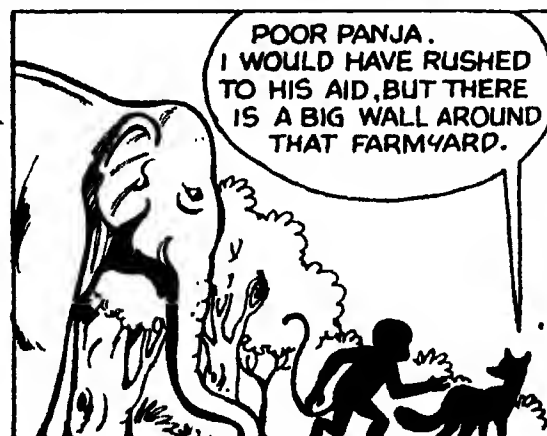
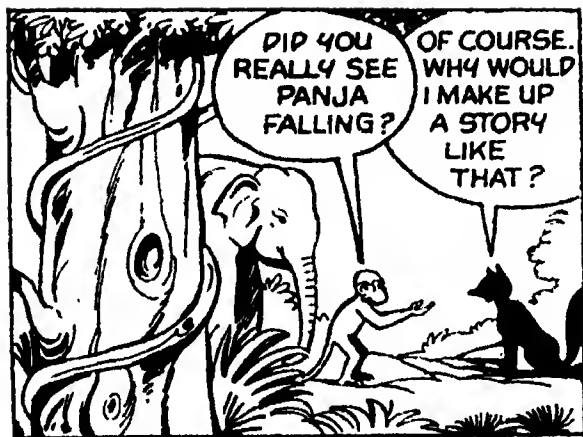


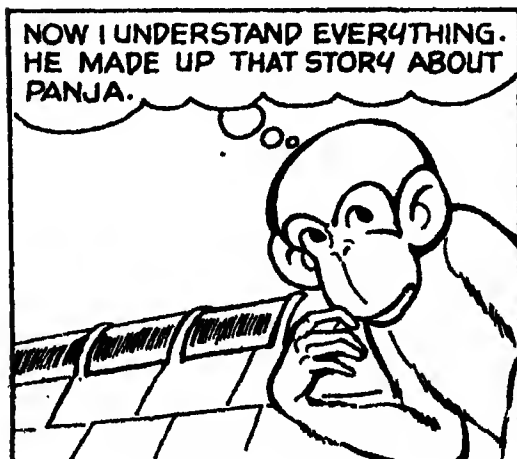
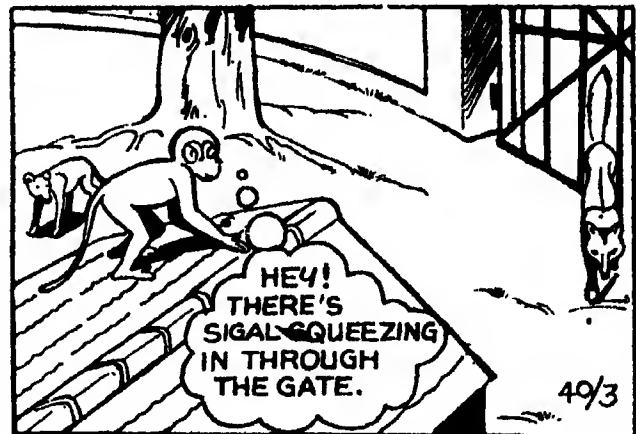
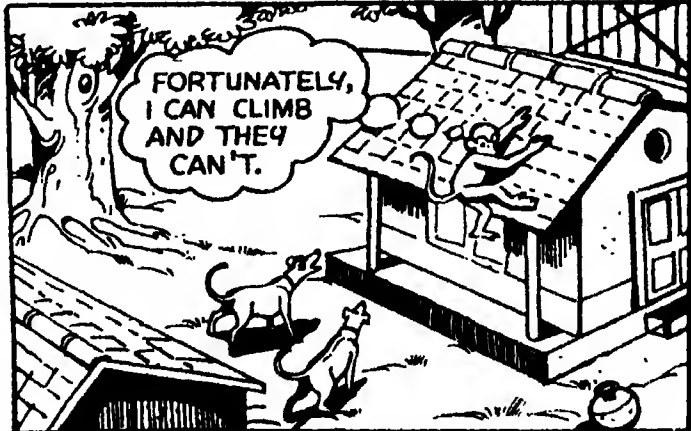
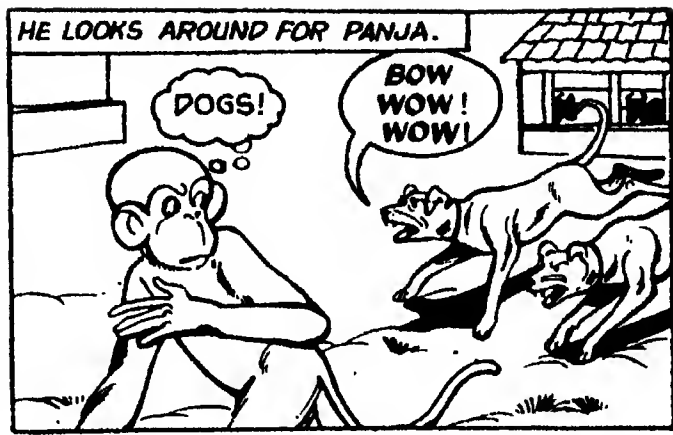
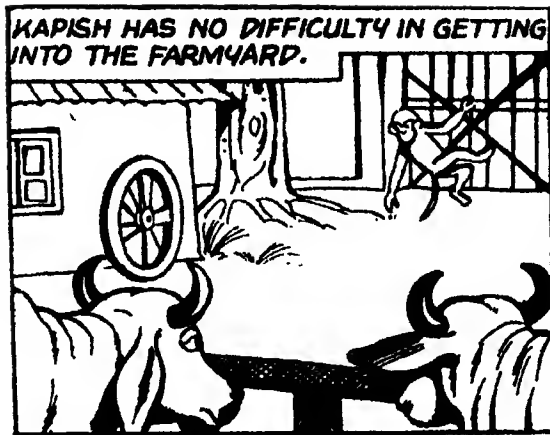
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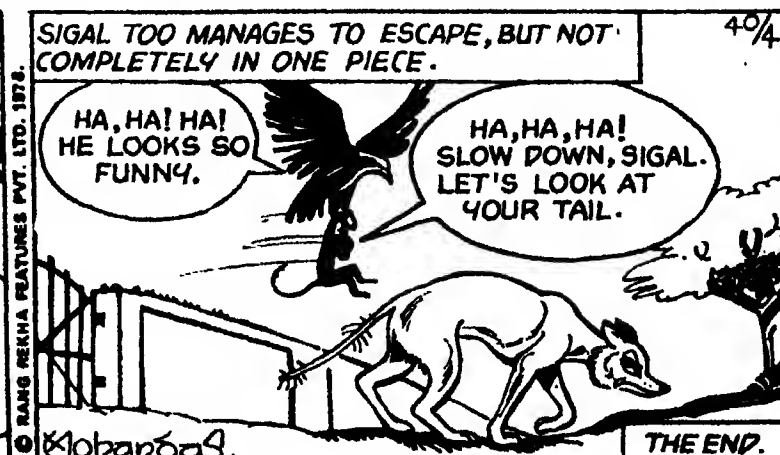
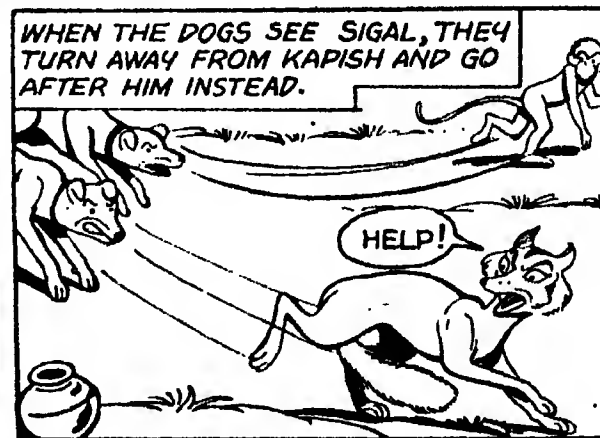
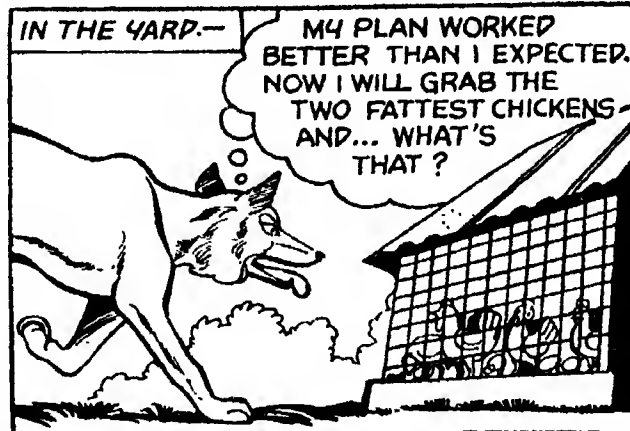
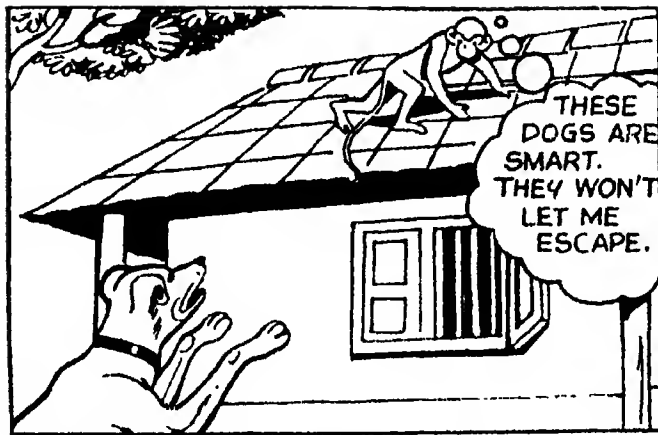
WAIT, SIGAL.











# When Munuaa Cleaned His Room

**N**OW what shall I do today?" said Munuaa. "I'm tired of my toys, and I've read all my books."

"Well, then, how about cleaning your room today?" remarked his mother. "I peeped into the cupboard yesterday. What a mess! Why don't you clean your room? It's too untidy and dirty for words! Whatever must your toys be thinking of you!"

"Oh yes! That's a splendid idea, Mummy! I could do that. Could I have a duster, please?"

"Yes, and I will also give you some old newspapers to spread over your shelves. You've a small, cosy little room but how untidy you keep it."

So Munuaa, armed with a duster and some old newspapers, marched joyfully to his room.

"I am going to clear up my room. I shall tell my friends about it at the playground this evening," he thought.

He entered his room and, for the first time, had a good look at it. The walls were beautifully white-washed; lovely blue and pink-striped curtains had been hung on the windows. A small bed occupied a corner of the room, leaving ample space for a study-table and a cupboard whose doors refused to shut! Toys were spread all over. Guns, bats, and hockey sticks had been tucked under the bed—an ideal home for mosquitoes and spiders indeed! Clothes were strewn about everywhere, and dusty books lay piled up on the table providing a finishing touch to an otherwise incomplete display of untidiness.

Munuaa didn't know where to begin.

"Let me start with the cupboard," he told himself.

So he took out all his clothes, placed them on his bed, and with the duster his mother had given him, dusted the shelves and wiped away the cobwebs!

Next were the toys. As he opened the wooden box, he almost shrieked. Out jumped a tiny little mouse, followed by another, and another. He carefully brought out his toys one by one, cleaned them, and placed

them on the other side.

'Ah! There is the engine,' he said to himself. 'But where is the engine driver? I had kept it back here when Aashu was pestering me on Isha's birthday. Perhaps I might have dropped it somewhere. But I couldn't have. That was two months ago. I haven't played with it ever since!' He was sure of himself.

Munuaa flung out his toys until he had emptied the whole box. He was desperately trying to locate the engine driver. But it just wasn't there! 'Oh, no! Don't tell me the soldier doll, too, is missing.'

Poor Munuaa. He was alarmed. "Mummy, Mummy, have you seen my engine driver?" he shouted, as he rushed towards the kitchen where his mother was busy cooking.

"Now, I don't play with your toys, Munuaa, you know that! Ask Isha, she might have hidden them in her dolls house."

"No, Dada, I haven't seen them," replied his sister, Isha.

"Oh, wherever could they have then gone?" Munuaa sighed.

Mohiti, Chinky, Tiuu, all shook their heads



one by one when Munuaa went round the neighbourhood asking his friends. No one had seen them. Now whom should he ask?

Yes, there was someone who knew. Sitting under the bed was the Teddy bear, who had often heard the dolls say, "Let's go out for a breath of fresh air. It's stuffy in here. The box is full of cobwebs."

And the night before, Teddy had seen them escape.

"I feel suffocated," Tatu the engine driver had said.

"Me, too," said Tuffy the soldier. "I feel like stretching my legs."

Tatu and Tuffy then crept out of the box, walked towards the window, climbed over a stool, and jumped out into the garden.

Teddy looked at his master. He was looking sad. They were his favourite toys.

"You'll have to save up from your pocket-money and buy a new soldier and engine driver. It's a pity to have such a wonderful engine and no one to drive it." Teddy heard Munuaa's mother say.

'I must help my master,' he thought. 'I shall go out and look for them tonight.'

It took Munuaa the whole day to clean up his room and, at the end of it, he felt proud of himself. 'Papa will be thrilled when he comes home today.'

Mother peeped in, too, and was surprised to see it spotlessly clean. "You deserve a reward now, Munu, for being such a wonderful boy! Your toys will be extremely happy to live in such a nice clean room."

"But, Mummy, my dolls... I can't find them."

"Never mind, I'll buy you new ones."

Meanwhile, Tatu and Tuffy were having a bad time, indeed!

Poor Tatu had sprained his ankle while jumping off the window sill. He couldn't walk. How distressing! Just when they were planning to run away!

Tuffy led the way and Tatu limped behind. They reached the road. Unfamiliar with the traffic rules, Tuffy kept marching

ahead. But Tatu was careful. He couldn't afford to risk another accident. He called out, "Listen, Tuffy, be careful," in a meek voice.

But Tuffy wasn't scared. "I am a soldier," he boasted.

No sooner had he said this than a scooter came that way and Tuffy was run over. His legs were broken, arms ripped off their joints, and the head smashed to pieces.

Poor darling Tuffy. He was no more.

Tatu was shocked. He had seen all this from a distance. What would he do? He couldn't bear the sight. He turned round and limped all the way back home.

'Munu must have woken up by now,' he thought. 'I must be careful lest I'm seen.' So he hid behind a bush waiting for night-fall.

At night, when Munuaa was fast asleep, Tatu crept into his bedroom. But Teddy was wide awake and deep in thought. He heard footsteps.

It was Tatu. But surprisingly he was alone.

"Where is Tuffy?" Teddy asked.

Tatu narrated the unfortunate incident in between sobs.

"Munu's very upset. He's been looking for both of you all afternoon. You must apologise to him now," Teddy pulled up Tatu.

But Tatu was shivering with fright. "I am so ashamed. I'll never be able to face him again," he said.

And Tatu never again appeared before Munuaa. During the day he hid himself in an old car that Munuaa never played with, but at night he walked about and stretched his legs.

He was almost caught one night, trying to drive the engine! But after that he was careful.

Till today, he is hiding in that old battered car, lying in a corner, under the seat. God help him if Munuaa catches him.

So, if ever you happen to join Munuaa for tea, do look for Tatu. You'll know where: under the seats of the old red car!

*Navin Anand*

# CAMEL ON THE WALL

## THE STORY SO FAR

Alok's Uncle Karan is a forest officer. He had led a very exciting life wherever he had been posted. Now at Rampur, Alok is on a week's visit to his uncle's forest home. He spends the whole day going round the plantations with his uncle.

At night, Uncle Karan leads Alok to his bedroom. There is a real fire burning in the fireplace. Drowsily Alok gazes at a little brown wooden carving of a camel on the wall. What magic, what adventure! He thinks sleepily.



It was early morning and the young boy was rubbing his baby camel Hira's flanks with soft white sand. Amar Singh issued orders to start on a journey and they set off, the little boy astride his beloved Hira. Days and nights passed in travel, when one night the boy was rudely shaken awake.

"Our tribe is in danger.....You must take our treasure to safety on your camel!"

After endless days of travelling alone, he reached the first signs of human settlement—Asingarh. Hidden in a clump of trees, he cooked for himself and tended Hira, sleeping every night with the treasure under his head—waiting to be summoned back to the tribe once the danger is past.

The uneasy feeling that he was being watched proved correct when one morning a man in khakhi stood behind him.

"I'll give you a place to stay, food to eat, a soft bed to sleep on.....I will be your friend," he promised.

The boy stared at him in silence. Then he turned round to gather his few scattered belongings, and caught hold of the rope around Hira's neck. The man smiled.

Now read on.....

**H**E stayed at the man's house for a long time. No one from his tribe came to collect the treasure; he still kept it next to himself when he slept. The man never even once asked him what the bundles contained. The boy had his own room, with a soft mattress to sleep on. The man was very kind to him; he always had plenty of food to eat and he could do whatever he liked all day. Some afternoons, the man would sit talking to him, asking him all about himself and the people he used to live with. The man said very little about himself. The people in the area liked him, even

though they did not consider him as one of themselves. He was a 'sarkari aadmi' (man from the government) — a class apart from themselves.

Gradually, the boy began to like the man very much. He was still in awe of him but he always treated the youngster graciously. He taught him to write strange-looking symbols that stood for sounds and words that one uttered. But the boy liked to draw figures the best of all. He would make line drawings of his tribesmen and of the camels and the desert, and try to show the man about the world he came from.

One night, Amar Singh came. He arrived in the dead of night at the boy's window and gestured to the frightened lad to go with him. The boy hesitated. He picked up the treasure-box and thrust it at Amar Singh. Amar Singh still waited. Come on, he gesticulated.

The boy thought of the kind man. He wanted to remain staying in this house, with him. Such goodness, such gentleness, such kindness as he had never before known.....

"Come!" hissed Amar Singh and pulled at the boy. The boy was so slight that it was no effort for Amar Singh to pull him over the window sill and to carry him away.

The boy turned his face towards the house where he had known such happiness so briefly. He stopped struggling in Amar Singh's hands.

The desert became his home again, the tribesmen and the camels his constant companions. The boy continued to draw pictures in the sand, as he had done for the man. He liked to draw camels the best, especially his own beloved Hira....

He never forgot the man. Years later, when the young boy had grown into a strapping lad, the tribe approached Asingarh during one of their long travels. One night the lad hurried off on his now-grown Hira. Would the man still be there? He hoped as he had never hoped before.

Everything looked the same: nothing had changed from the days he had spent in the large rambling bungalow with the man.

But now, there was someone else sitting at the table out on the verandah in the light of a hurricane-lamp. Someone else who lived in the house. Where had *the man* gone?

The forest officer looked up and saw the lad watching him. "Yes?" he queried moving to the



top of the steps. "What do you want?"

"Babuji?" blurted out the lad. "Where is Babuji?"

The man's face took on a strange expression. "Babuji? Who's Babuji? Do you want to meet me? I'll help you. Just tell me what it is...."

The lad's glance darted around, searching for signs of *the man's* presence. But, no, everything that he could see was strange and different, belonging to *this* man. He wondered for a moment whether he had come to the wrong house. But, then, he knew *that* he could never be mistaken — the house and *the man* still remained fresh in his memory.

He looked helplessly at the stranger before him. "Babuji?" he asked again and lifted his hand in the air to show that Babuji had been tall and then cocked a finger to show that he had been slim as well. "He used to stay here," he said, hopefully watching the man's face. "He was very nice, very kind...."

The man's expression changed. "He was tall? Thin? He used to stay here? That's likely. I came here only three years ago; he could have been one of the officers here before me. I'm afraid I don't know who he could be or his name. But I could always find out. What did you have to do with him?"

The lad stared incredulously at him. He fumbled in the deep folds of his garment and pulled out a wooden plaque. He gazed down at it in silence as if investing it with a secret message, then thrust it across at the man.

"Please give this to him," he said.

The man took the plaque and looked at it. It was a camel, beautifully carved, so very life-like that one almost held one's breath in wonder. He looked at the lad and his eyes softened.

"Did you make it?" he asked.

The boy gave an almost unnoticeable nod. Yes, he *had* made it....specially for *the man*. It was his way of saying 'thank you' to the man for some of the happiest days he had ever known.

The man looked down at the camel and up at the boy again. "Don't worry. I'll find the 'Babuji' and give this into his hands, myself."

The lad flashed a sudden smile at him and the next moment, he turned to go. Just then, the wooden camel-carving suddenly slipped from the man's hand and fell sharply to the ground. The lad turned round. A small part of the camel's tail had broken off.

The man picked up the piece, an apologetic

look creeping up his face. "I *am* sorry," he said. "But don't worry. I'll fix the pieces together. You go....you go....Oh — wait! What's your name, boy... ..who shall I say gave this....?"

But the boy had disappeared into the blackness of the night. The man looked down at the pieces. Suddenly, the whole event took on a new importance. Yes, he would make all attempts to trace out the 'Babuji' who had been there before him and hand over this precious gift to him.

"Alok...wake up..." cajoled Uncle Karan. Alok opened his eyes in surprise. It was dawn. And they were scheduled to start early on their day's rounds. He stretched and yawned, and as he remembered something, his mouth fell half open in surprise.

What on earth had he dreamt about? What a strange long dream it had been! But, then, had it *been* a dream at all?

He looked at Uncle Karan standing at the window, gazing out into a grey-blue dawn. How fond he was of his Uncle Karan! He always felt close to him in a way that he never did with anyone else. Uncle Karan always understood him with such ease.

The camel on the wall caught his eye. The *camell*! It was dark on the wall where the camel was — the fire had gone out during the night and the sun was yet to rise.

In a trice, Alok was running across, barefoot, to the camel-carving. Even in the semi-darkness, it looked lovely and very real. What a truly beautiful work of art it was!

Alok reached out a finger to feel the contours of the camel. His heart was thumping. How silly, he told himself. The camel carving had fallen down and *broken* in his dream. Supposing....

He ran his finger over the hump of the little camel and down towards the tail.

Yes — *there* it was — an almost unnoticeable little crack where two pieces must have been glued together. He couldn't be imagining it, *there really was a crack*....

Uncle Karan turned back from the window. He looked surprised to find Alok peering at the camel in the dark little corner.

"You really *are* fascinated by that, aren't you?"

Alok licked his dry lips. He turned to look at Uncle Karan. "Tell me, Uncle," he asked, "who really gave this to you?"

Uncle's eyes took on a far away expression. "It



was a tribesman from one of the desert tribes. I met him as a boy, really when I was posted at Asimgarh....."

Alok almost spluttered in excitement. Asimgarh! "Uncle..... I know....I know all about it! I really do!"

Uncle Karan looked very surprised. "What is it that you know?"

"Years and years later, when that boy grew up, he sent it to you as a gift, didn't he? But you... you never saw him again...."

Uncle Karan looked startled. "How did you know about this? It's something that I've told nobody about. And definitely not you....."

Alok's eyes were almost popping. "I dreamt about it last night. But it didn't seem like a dream. It was all so real — as if it was really happening

before my eyes....What do you suppose..... Uncle....?"

They both stared at each other as ripples of something quite eerie went down both their spines.

Uncle Karan looked out of the window at the first few rays of a rising sun. "We're late this morning," he announced. "We can't delay our rounds anymore. Now supposing you tell me all about it in the jeep as we go...?"

Alok was already tripping off with long excited strides to the bathroom, while a golden finger of sunlight touched lightly upon the camel on the wall and set it glowing.

*Padmini Rao*

*(Concluded)*

## **"MIND YOUR BUSINESS"**

**A** HUNGRY wolf, prowling for food in a forest, saw a donkey grazing at a distance. Moving quietly through the shrubs, the wolf stealthily approached the donkey.

The donkey suddenly sensed danger but it was too late to run. So, doing a bit of quick thinking, he hit upon a plan. He started limping and addressed the wolf in soft, quiet tones. "Welcome to you, Mr. Wolf. You seem to be awfully hungry. Be my honoured guest. I would have offered you delicious food. But here, at this moment, I have nothing except my own flesh and blood. And I hesitate to offer these to you." The donkey then added sorrowfully, "I am afraid you might die, if you eat me."

"Why?" asked the wolf. "I have killed and eaten hundreds of donkeys and have survived. Don't you find me hale and hearty? I am fit enough to pounce on you this instant."

"Mr. Wolf," said the donkey, "I must caution you. A big thorn has got stuck in my hind leg. See how I am limping. If you eat me, the thorn's poison will kill you. Please pull out the thorn first. Then only will you be able to eat me safely."

The wolf went near the hind leg of the donkey. He peered at the hoof to spot the thorn. Seizing the opportunity the donkey kicked hard and smashed the head of the wolf.

*G. Neelakantam*

# A NIGHT

MADHUKAR and Vinayak were cousins. They were always full of mischief. Pranks were just routine for them. If anything went wrong, one could be sure that either of them had a hand in it. In the house, at the school, on the playground, in fact wherever they were, they would do something outrageous and obviously were not popular for it: their teachers, family, friends, neighbours, all were vexed with them. All advice, scolding or coaxing was lost on them. And just like the tail of a dog that remains crooked, Madhukar and Vinayak could not be reformed. Yet, they were loved dearly by all.

One day, when Madhukar went to school after an absence of two or three days, he had a huge bandage on his head. He was soon surrounded by his friends. "Now, Madhu," cried Ramu, "what on earth has happened to you?"

"Another great fall?" commented Ganesh.

"Or perhaps an aircrash," said Suresh, "judging from the size of the bandage!"

Madhu was grim. He did not reply. His friends, however, were persistent and eventually coaxed him into telling his story when they later assembled at the playground.

"Well, the thing happened about fifteen days back," Madhu began slowly.

"What thing?" asked Munna, rather puzzled. He was staring at his other friends playing kabbadi at a distance.

"A strange occurrence," said Madhu after a pause. "You all have been to our house at Gokulpeth, haven't you? Do you remember a three-storeyed villa, opposite our house?"

The boys nodded. "Oh, yes," said Ramu, "you told us it belong to one Deshmukh, isn't it?"

"Yes, Vamanrao Deshmukh, the retired judge. The house has been lying vacant for six months now. It seems there is some court case or something like that going on over this house, and the Deshmukhs have shifted to Poona."

"Where is your precious adventure?" grumbled Suresh. "You're boring us with the



# TO REMEMBER

Deshmukhs and all that nonsense.”

“Patience,” said Madhukar, “I’m coming to that presently. “One night I was suddenly awakened from my sleep. A bright light came and struck my eyes. It was coming from the second floor balcony of the Deshmukh villa.

“I was puzzled. I thought to myself, ‘This house has been lying vacant for six months, then why this light? Have the Deshmukhs come back?’

“I examined the house during the day, and saw that all the doors were securely locked. Yet the same thing occurred the following night and the night after. Sometimes there was light on the ground floor, sometimes in the attic; it would burn for a short while and then would be put out.

“After this went on for a week or so, I took Vinoo, who sleeps in a room next to mine, into confidence.

“Now, Vinoo has his head full of ghost stories! He was thrilled with my narrative and thought it was spooky business. Surely, the house was haunted. But I had my doubts. Anyway, we decided to investigate.

“The next day being Sunday, we went out and checked the premises thoroughly. The doors and windows were closed. The big padlock on the main door lay rusted. Some glasspanes of the windows were broken at places. The loose end of the radio aerial was dangling from the roof. A family of pigeons had made their home under the cornices and their droppings had dirtied the footpaths at either side of the house. We examined the side gate. That was also firmly shut.

“It was certain that nobody was staying in the house. This made us believe it was haunted. My mind was uneasy, though I wasn’t scared.

“The next night, my mother and Vinoo’s mother, we knew, would be out listening to the all-night kirtan at the Vithoba temple. My father and uncle were in Bombay, attending the wedding of a relative. Only Vinoo and myself were left here.

“So, soon after our mothers left, we bolted our main gate and went up to the roof to watch. It was boring; we could not talk, we couldn’t do anything. We just had to wait. We did not want the spooks to know we were watching them. We had to suffer the mosquito-bites in silence, hear the ominous owls hooting, the cats gamboling, and so on. All, without uttering a word.

“Suddenly, at midnight, the staircase light of the villa came on. We held on to each other excitedly. We were all ears. Peering over the parapet without blinking, we noticed this light being switched off and the first floor light being switched on. A little later, the second floor light came on, and then a light in the attic. Immediately after that, one by one the lights were switched off. A few moments later, the whole house was plunged in darkness again.

“‘Strange!’ echoed Vinoo and I.

“After a gap of fifteen minutes or so, there was light in the ground floor again and it remained for a very long time.

“Well, this funny business of switching on and off continued for sometime. It must have been half-past one, for the siren for the second shift of the nearby mills had gone, and some mill workers could be seen chattering and laughing as they walked home.

“Then all was dark once again. We were too excited to sleep. Every moment we were expecting something terrible to happen. Then, like in a horror film, there emerged from the darkness a piercing shriek.

“Vinoo tugged at my sleeve. ‘Come, Madhu,’ he said in a whisper, ‘let’s go and see what the matter is. Maybe, it is not a ghost after all.’

“We raced downstairs as fast as we could and, opening the main door, peered outside. To our astonishment we saw all the lights of the villa on.

“As we were wondering what our next step should be, something fell crashing on the footpath. A weird laugh rang sharply in the still air surrounding us.

"A chill ran down my spine. Slowly, the lights were extinguished one by one, and in the darkness we crept. We crossed the dimly lit street and reached the villa. The house looked sinister. Nevertheless, we groped our way. We tried opening the main door, but it was securely fastened. So were the windows. We crept along the side of the house. At one end was a garage which opened on to the lane. We had often seen the Deshmukhs' big car being driven out of this garage.

"The light in the garage was on and we

heard two men talking inside in hushed voices. We opened the door slightly and looked inside. A strange sight met our eyes. There was a large oven over which some dark liquid was simmering in a huge pot.

"We had barely entered, when one of the men rose and hit me with a stick which came down on my head like a ton of bricks.

"I lost consciousness."

Madhukar paused. All those around him gasped in wonder.

"When I regained consciousness, I found myself in my room. I was surrounded by my



parents, uncles, cousins, and Vinoo with his arm in a sling.

"I learnt the rest of the story later from my father and Vinoo. Vinoo told me that, after hitting me, the man went after him but he managed to slip away. Unfortunately, while running out, he tripped on the cobbled footpath and broke his arm. Just at that moment, luckily for him, two policemen on their rounds came there and helped him to his feet and carried him to the house. When they were told the whole story, they immediately telephoned the police headquarters.

"Within fifteen minutes a big lorry full of armed police arrived. They surrounded the villa and forced their way in. They rescued me, while I was still unconscious.

"There were six persons, all thieves and smugglers, in the house. They were preparing country wine, and cocaine."

Madhukar stopped.

Suresh whistled. "Aha! So that's that! But what about the mystery of the lights?"

"That was a signal for their 'agents' to come and collect the goods. Naturally, they did not expect anyone to be watching the house. In a big city, who keeps a watch on lights going off and on in a house?"

"Is this the end of the story?" someone asked.

Vinoo, who had been silent all along, spoke. "Well, both of us received a reward from the Police. Madhu will buy a new transistor set. And I will get a new bicycle."

*Romen Palit*

## Adventures of a Pair of Shoes

**D**ON'T look at me with disgust, young lady! Do you think I am useless? I have had a great beginning. About four years back, I was made from leather in a factory in Colaba. I was from a very special quality family. At the factory, I was shaped into a pair of shoes, to fit a girl of about 10 or 11 years old. I was painted red with a beautiful pattern in the front and two bows on each side, joining a golden buckle.

Once I got my dress, I was dispatched along with some of my friends, in a big truck to a shop. I was arranged by the shopkeeper in a showcase with some of the other shoes. Being a reflexible variety, he priced me Rs. 85. I was proud of myself and all the others were jealous of me. Whenever any customer came, he would stare at me and then ask the shopkeeper my price. Most of them, after being told that I cost Rs. 85, would leave, after giving me a long look.

One fine day, a famous actor entered the shop with his daughter. She saw me and clapped her hands in delight. "Father, Father! I want this pair of shoes," she shouted, pointing to me.

The shopkeeper immediately rushed, took me out of the showcase. He wrapped me in

a very delicate paper. I went to her house in a big car. We both were very happy with each other. The little girl used to wear me whenever she went for parties and weddings—but not to her school. She kept me in great comfort in her beautiful bedroom. I sat on a shocrack along with her three or four slippers and her school shoes. I lived with her for about four years.

But, one unlucky day, we were separated. That day my golden buckle broke. I was given to a cobbler, who was a greedy person. He hid me in his shop, and told my mistress that it would take a couple of days to repair me. I think he wanted to sell me to someone else. But, the very next day, his shop was gutted. I was thrown on the pavement. Somebody poured water at great speed. I was nearly drowned. Just then, two small hands caught me from going into a large manhole. I was taken to a small cottage. There, two girls tried me, but I was too small for their feet. They threw me on the road. And, here you are, looking at me with disgust. Why not take me home and get me repaired?

*Sangeeta Kalra*

**T**HE call of the Himalayas have challenged men for centuries. Thousands of tourists, mountaineers, and trekkers go there every year.

I was one of the 1,200 trekkers who went for the 'National Himalayan Trekking Programme 78' organized by the "Youth Hostels Association of India". I went with a group of 9 students and 2 teachers of our school.

The fun of living in a camp; putting some necessities into a rucksack and to trek is to be experienced to be enjoyed. Trekking has an irresistible attraction of its own.

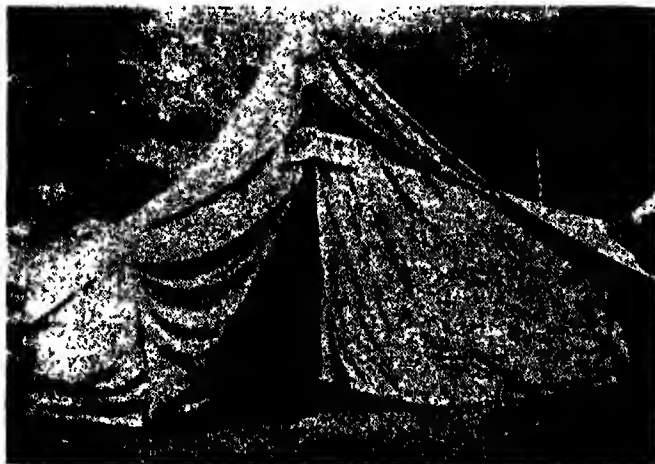
Our trek route was "Kishtwar-Brahma Peak Base-and back". The route lies in the Jammu region and covers one of the most pleasant regions of the Himalayas.

Base Camp Kishtwar (5,500 ft.) is a full day's bus journey from Jammu city. We reached there in the evening on June 12.

On the first day, we got up very early and did some exercises to warm up. After breakfast, we went for an acclimatization walk. We walked upto the Chenab (about 2 km from camp) and back.

The rest of the time we had spots of orientation.

The second day we went for rock climbing. An experienced climber gave us training in three main forms. First, "chimney climb" (climbing through "gullies" formed by rain water). The second one was "three-point climb". Then "wrapping" (coming down with the help of a rope). Then we



'Harmukh' was the name of our tent. Each tent was given a name after a mountain peak, like Nanda Khai and Brahma. Our tent housed 10 children and two teachers.

## A TREK TO THE HIMALAYAS

had some more orientation from our Field Director, Brig. Gyan Singh.

The next day, we packed our rucksacks and started our trek. Our first trek was to Palmar. Upto Bandarkote (halfway to Palmar), the way was downhill and easy. Bandarkote is the meeting point of the rivers Chandrabhaga and the Marwah, to form the Chenab. After Bandarkote, the going was tough. The sun was up and water scarce. Most of us had also developed blisters on our feet. To add to our discomforts, we lost our way a good number of times! With the help of the kind and hospitable locals, we at last reached Palmar camp (5,900 ft.) All our troubles were forgotten once we reached the camp.

Our next destination was Ekhal (14 km away). We started early. That day's trek was quite easy, mainly because we were in the shadow. We passed through Tilmil Pass from where we could have a panoramic view of the surroundings. We could see that the sun's light had created a beautiful optical illusion. There were hazy layers of different colours outlining the far-off mountains, from where the Marwah was flowing.

Just before the camp, we crossed a pine forest. It was fun going through a forest of tall and sweetsmelling pine.

By about 10, we reached Ekhal (5,600 ft.).

Here we came to know that our group of 12 was the youngest and the fastest to join the trek. We had set a record of travelling between Palmar and Ekhal. To commemorate the occasion, we were christened "Super 21". In the night we slept after a gay campfire.

The next trek was to Sonder—an 18 km stretch. That day we had to cross innumerable "nullahs", sometimes on a single rickety log—certainly not a laughing matter.

By noon we reached Sonder (7,000 ft.).





We go on an acclimatization walk at the base camp.

The speciality of the day was that we crossed our first snow-patch. The snow was piled up on both sides of a small stream.

Our next destination—Nantnala—was 14 km away. That day we crossed two large snow-patches.

The seventh day we started out for the Brahma Peak Base camp (10,000 ft). The route was dotted with many large snow-fields. We played a lot with snowballs and made a real mess of ourselves. We reached the camp by noon.

The next day, being a rest day, we left our luggage at the camp and walked to a nearby glacier and saw the great Brahma Peak (21,000 ft). It certainly is very beautiful—no wonder the locals consider it to be sacred. We also saw Trisandhya—a stream which flows from the bottom to the top, defying the law of gravity!

The next five days we retraced our steps back to Kishtwar.

In all, we travelled about 150 km. Our highest camp was at 10,000 ft, but we went upto 11,000 ft.

We passed through forests having many animals, like the Black bear, white bear, snow leopard (ibex) and Pigar (sheep). The common foliage we saw was the pine, the rhododendron bushes, walnut trees, etc. We also saw "touchwood". Its twig burns out slowly and so can be used as a torch. We saw a flowery mushroom "Gubi".

Among the 'locals' we met one young man who deserves special mention. The man (we never got round to ask his name) walked

with us a long way between Ekhalala and Sonder. He had never been to school, but he certainly knew a lot about current affairs. His only contact with the outside world was his transistor. His interesting talk made us forget our fatigue. It was only after he had treated us to a cup of tea and parted, that we noticed we had walked 10 km without feeling tired.

The people we met had thought up many ingenious ideas. They use a tubular plant called "Kins" as a soap. The woolly flower of a plant ("Kuth") is used to keep the moths away. The people either cultivate crops or tend sheep. The best way to describe these men will be to quote Rudyard Kipling: "These men (the hillmen) are as tough as the rocks of hills they live on."

We also learnt some strange customs. Like: The people of Ekhalala first marry a widow to a tree. Only if the tree blooms can she remarry! Can you beat it?

There were funny moments too—for example, when my friend got on to an ass for a ride. And the ass did take him for a ride! My poor friend clung on for dear life, as the ass ran helter-skelter. We ran behind him, our cameras clicking!

Like everything else, our trip too had to end. It ended on June 26, when we waved good-bye to Kishtwar—hopefully until next year.

Vinod Kurup (12)  
India



Our group at the Banderkote bridge, where the river Marwah meets Chandrabhaga to form the Chenab.

(Photographs by the author)



# THE CREATION

**T**HE world was created when chaos was destroyed to bring in order. Almost all mythologies believe this, but the stories behind them differ. Chinese mythology has as fascinating a tale to tell about creation as any other mythology in the world.

Hu, the Emperor of the Northern Sea, and Shu, the Emperor of the Southern Sea, would often meet half-way between their respective kingdoms, in the dominion of Hun-tun, who was the Emperor of the Centre. Hun-tun was generous and hospitable, and entertained his royal guests lavishly. He

was, however, something of a freak, for he lacked the seven orifices for seeing, eating, hearing, and breathing. Hu and Shu, who had often partaken of Hun-tun's hospitality, wished to do something to show their gratitude to him. So, they decided they would bore the necessary holes in Hun-tun, so that he would become a normal creature. Hun-tun agreed happily, and they began their work, boring one hole a day. But, on the seventh day, when the last hole was left, Hun-tun died. At the moment of his death, the world came into being. Hun-tun means 'chaos', and the combined names of the two emperors Shu-hu means 'lightning'. So that, as the lightning struck chaos, annihilating it, the world emerged.

The world was a beautiful place. Colourful flowering plants grew in it, and strange and varied animals roamed the earth. But these were without any intelligence. So Phanku, the dwarf-god, decided to create Man, who would rule over the world with rational intelligence. He took some clay and modelled men and women out of it. This took him a whole day. When they dried, they were immediately filled with Yin and Yang (the male and female spirits), and they became human beings. Now Phanku had made a large number of these clay figures and was baking them in the sun when, suddenly, the sky was overcast with ominously dark clouds. Fearing that his whole day's labour would be destroyed in the storm, he carefully carried them inside on a large fork. But the storm broke before he could get all the figures safely under shelter; as a result, many of them were badly damaged. These damaged figures, it is believed, are the lame and crippled people.

Chinese mythology boasts of countless deities, such as Kuan-Ti the god of War; the Celestial Emperor; the King of the Gods; Phanku the creator of Man; Kuan Yin the goddess of Mercy; Teng Po the wind



god; and several other major and minor deities, all of whom had an informal relationship with human beings.

For example, Yu who was in charge of controlling the flood waters. Yu was the son of Khun and emerged fully grown from his father's dead body. He asked the Celestial Emperor for some swelling earth and, with this boon, he started damming the springs from which the waters came. Then he built huge mountains, as a safety resort. Of course, there were gaps and fissures, and that is why we still have floods.

They were some of the benevolent deities.

There existed, side by side, the demons, just

as good and evil always exist together. The demons, evil Kuei (spirits), were harmful to man. They were the souls of those who had died by drowning or suicide. They were barred from being re-born, for a certain period of time, and returned to earth as terrible ghosts. Animals, too, were among the demonic creatures, such as the fox and badger who, assuming the form of beauty, lured unwary people, then slowly consumed their beings, to prolong their own foul existence. The ancient Chinese had several charms and formulas to ward off these malevolent spirits.

*Geeta Chowdhury*

## AN AFRICAN LEGEND

# THE FOX HAS HIS DAY!

ONCE there were two friends, a fox and a gazelle, living in a deep jungle of Africa. They searched for their food together and always shared it. One day, they came upon a tree with lots of honey on it. The fox lied that the tree belonged to him, and the gazelle believed him. They collected lots of dried leaves and straw and climbed up the tree. There they set fire to the straw and the leaves. When the bees were smoked away, they settled down to enjoy a hearty meal of delicious sweet honey.

The tree actually belonged to a lion, and not the fox. And it so happened that the lion was just then passing by and he spotted the two of them relishing honey from his tree! He roared furiously and ordered them to come down at once.

The fox quickly whispered in the gazelle's ear that he would hide in the left over straw and the gazelle should throw him at the lion. The poor gazelle was so terrified that she did as she was told. On seeing the huge bundle of straw come hurtling down on him, the lion jumped aside. And before he could gather his wits, the cunning fox had leaped out and vanished into the deep jungle. The lion was mad with rage and swore to take revenge on the fox. The poor gazelle was a

prey to the lion's fury.

The lion then decided to go after the fox. When he reached the fox's lair, it was empty. He went inside to wait for the sly fox.

In a short while the fox came home. As was his usual practice, he stood at a distance and shouted, "Good day, my dear house. It's good to be home again."

When he got no reply, the fox repeated, "Good day, my dear house. Why is it that you are not greeting me today? You never fail to do so."

The lion was a bit perplexed and after thinking for a while, he said softly, "Good day. Welcome home."

The fox laughed aloud and said, "Oh, you stupid lion! Whoever has heard of a house talking? Now you can't get me."

The lion leaped out to grab him, but the fox was too swift-footed for him, and once again escaped the clutches of the lion.

The fox ran for his life with the lion in hot pursuit. He ran so much that he was terribly thirsty. He came across a well with two buckets on a rope. Without thinking twice, he stepped into one of the buckets and lowered himself to the bottom of the well. He drank the water to his heart's fill

but then he was in a fix. How was he to get out of the well?

A hyena passing by peeped into the well and saw the fox down there. "What are you up to, dear fox?" he asked.

"I have just finished eating a big chunk of butter. There is still a lot more left, but I have had enough. Why don't you come and finish it?" he asked slyly.

The hyena peeped into the well and saw

something round and yellow floating in the water. That was, in fact, the reflection of the moon, but the hyena believed the fox, and lowered himself down into the well. As his bucket went down, alongside the fox's bucket rose to the surface. He quickly jumped out and slunk off into the thick of the forest to face another day.

Alaka Shankar

## WORD-PLAY

by S. Kamath (12) India

WORLD CLOCK



OLYMPIC



ICE-CREAM



A...P...A...R...T

JUMP

BALLOON

Mountains



GLASS

# INDIAN ART FOR CHILDREN



**T**O CATCH them young is a good idea, and Thomson's **Indian Art Painting Books** are trying to do just that. But between the effort and the achievement much is left to be desired. In series of two, four themes are selected for the age group "eight and over". The themes selected are 'Buddha', 'Krishna', 'Wildlife' and 'Courtlife'.

The paintings have been compiled by Roohi Juncja. Priced at Rs. 1.75 each, the books can be taken off the staples and each sheet painted according to the colour scheme given on the back flap.

If the intention of these work books is thoroughly to acquaint children with a cross-section of the art styles of ancient and modern India, then the effort could have been laudable. But much of the purpose seems to have been defeated by the Editor's Note, which says: "Indian art is generally very decorative. In some of the drawings the decorations have been included, in others not, because often the decorations are so tiny and detailed as to strain the eyes. This book will

introduce you to Indian art." Alas, it remains merely an introduction, and one is left wondering how many eight-year-olds would actually consult the "many books available in bookshops and libraries."

There is a merry conglomeration of art styles thoughtlessly grouped together in order to form some sequence for a chosen theme. The two or three-line text neither traces the historical character of the Buddha or Krishna; neither is any definitive picture of courtlife or wildlife formed because of the pot-pourri of art styles belonging to different periods of time and different parts of the country. Modern art styles are juxtaposed with paintings of the 5th and 6th century A.D., with a one-line introduction to its period. Eg: Wildlife Book 1 has "Two Ducks"—an Ajanta painting facing a "Water Snake Swallowing a Fish," which belongs to the modern Kalighat school. And in Wildlife Book 2, there is a similar juxtaposition in "Flying Swans" and "Fresh Water Prawns with Catfish."

It is also very strange that books which claim to serve as an introduction to art fail even to give the barest details of a particular school's characteristics, or how it differs from or is similar to the others used in the same book. There is a total disregard to colour schemes, too. In a total of 15 illustrations in Buddha Book 1, nine illustrations are in two tones each of the dullest greys, blues, browns, and yellows. The same is true of some of the others, the worst example being the "Monkey and the Crocodile Story" in Wildlife Book 1. In shades of grey, the small intricate pattern of a Borobudur sculpture of 8th century Java, it seems to be the most trying of illustrations to colour.

By providing a colour scheme, not only is the lively imagination of an eight-year-old being curbed, but since the details are also not accurate, it is not being curbed to any authentic purpose.

There is scant attention paid to the selection of adequate pictures for a particular theme. Under 'Wildlife' comes the Mohenjo Daro buffalo seal, the monkey and crocodile sculpture, a picture of a camel led by a man, a prawn, a butterfly, and even the symbolic Ashoka lion!

In 'Courtlife', the figure of Nataraja 'God of music and dance' is used instead of an actual dance and music scene so common to our colourful courtlife of yore.

It is a pity, therefore, that so much of research and compilation work has been unsatisfactorily used in promoting the knowledge of the young ones with regard to the very rich, colourful and diverse styles of Indian art.

V.S.

**A Summer Adventure**  
by Shashi Deshpande  
India Book House, Bombay  
Rs. 6.00

**S**HASHI DESHPANDE'S forte has been freelance journalism and short-story writing. Hence, one goes to her first children's book, *A Summer Adventure*, with enthusiasm and anticipation to see how she handles the very tricky art of writing for children. And to her credit, her debut is promising.

*A Summer Adventure* involves three chil-

dren—Dinu, Minu, and Polly—and their city-reared cousin, Ravi. Ravi takes to the suburban life like a duck to water. Their fun-filled and leisurely holidays gain pace and thrill when there is a succession of robberies in the neighbourhood. The four children start on a detecting spree, spying, snooping, suspecting, and what have you. According to their conjectures, Dhondu, a scary-looking uncle of their friend Govind, is suspect no. 1. They go all out to catch the culprit red-handed. Dinu and Ravi get up to some very daring adventures, while the girls thankfully stay at home. But Minu and Polly, too, aren't spared. At the climax, they are locked into a dark room by the culprit and have to wait it out to be rescued! In the meantime, the mystery is solved, and the real culprit apprehended.

Shashi Deshpande has built her book on a very thin story-line. The plot has to take in considerable padding to make the grade. However, as the blurb states, it is a re-creation of Mrs. Deshpande's own childhood, which explains the authenticity of the details. Her style is simple, lucid, and flowing.

*A Summer Adventure* makes exciting reading for the 9-12 age group.

S.V.

**The Telecom Story**  
by Mohan Sundara Rajan  
National Book Trust, New Delhi  
Rs. 12.50

**T**HE advent of electronics has revolutionised the world of communications. Places, which were considered too far removed for direct contact only a few years ago, can now be contacted in a matter of seconds. The changes pioneered by stalwarts like Graham Bell and Marconi are now developing at a very fast pace. Beginning with telegraph and telephone, the means of communications have grown in different terms like radio, TV, satellite, computer, facsimile, and transistors.

The history of this revolution in communications starts in the 19th century with Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922), the inventor of telephone, and Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937), the inventor of radio. Mohan Sundara Rajan has made an attempt at trac-

ing the history of this revolution down from the 19th century to the very recent. He deals with telephones, telegraph, cables, radio, TV, micro waves, VHF (Very High Frequency), UHF (Ultra High Frequency), satellite, teleprinter, facsimile, optical fibre communication, and integrated circuits.

The author has made commendable efforts in compiling a history sheet of the means of communications. The book is replete with facts and figures, supplemented by a number of photographs and charts and a glossary of the technical terms.

A book which should have served as a valuable source of information often suffers from the introduction of too many technical

terms without proper explanatory details. The glossary is not exhaustive. For example, the term, 'Amplitude modulation' is explained, but the related 'Frequency modulation' is left out. A little more care in the preparation of the text would have improved the utility of the book, especially to students of science. Besides, very closely related developments are mentioned at different parts of the book.

All this, however, does not mean that the book fails to serve its purpose. It does contain a lot of information which is useful to the ordinary reader interested in the field of communications.

G.R.P.

## **This Piper Pipes a Different Tune**

**Y**OU folks are probably familiar with the "Pied Piper of Hamelin." In town, the other day was another "Pied Piper"—from Hamlyn. Only he has an everyday name, like William T. Dancer. And Mr. Dancer doesn't play on the flute to lure all the kids away—he is the Director of a publishing house in the U.K. which brings out 'alluring' books for children and bears the trade name of Hamlyn. The 'old-timers' among you will probably remember some of the Hamlyn books reviewed in these columns,

Kids between the ages of 5-12 are the ones that are pampered by Hamlyn! Mr. Dancer and his colleague, Mr. Richard Blady, came all the way here to tell us what they are going to do for the children of India. Hamlyn's 'pied piper', in his bid to 'lure' Indian children, is going to cast a different spell. Hamlyn has joined hands with Macmillan's of India (another publishing house, whose books we've reviewed for you) and they are going to bring out a num-

ber of books from India, which will be of special interest to Indian children. A lot of books should be forthcoming, especially reference books, and since Hamlyn-Macmillan claim they are going to keep the prices as low as they can, it's about time you thought of looking up some titles.

What with the 'International Year of the Child' almost on the threshold, every 'body' is falling over the other to 'do' something special to mark the event. Hamlyn books have a head-start with the books they have been bringing out for children on a variety of subjects. They begin at the beginning, 'a very good place to start' with alphabet books, bed-time stories, fairy tales, adventure stories, reference books, books on general knowledge, spacecraft, the list goes on,—you name it and they have it. Only Hamlyn intends to keep the good work going for some time to come. Here's hoping the Indian tune from Hamlyn casts the proverbial spell!

*Vaijayanti Savant*

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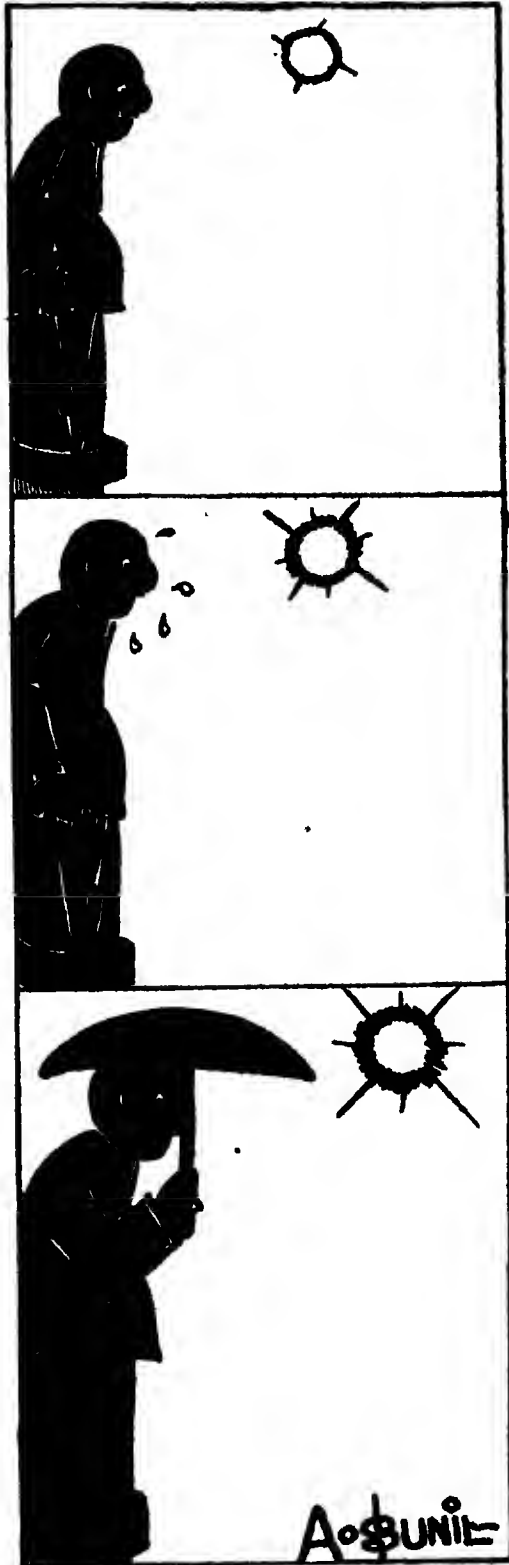
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# LAUGH WITH US !



Patient: I have pain on my right leg, doctor.

Doctor (after examining him carefully): There's nothing to worry. It's just because of old age.

Patient: Strange! Till now I thought both my legs were of the same age.

*Ajit Randhawa (10)*

Two boys living in a hostel were reading letters from home. Suddenly, Ramesh gave a shout. "Hey, my brother has grown a third foot."

"Don't be silly, Ramesh," said Vinod.

"I'm not silly, you stupid. It's written here: 'You won't recognise Varun now. He has grown another foot.'"

*A.K. Srinivasan*

Bonnie: What are you doing?

Sonnie: Writing to a friend.

Bonnie: But you don't know how to write.

Sonnie: That's all right. He can't read either.

*Samir Kalia*

Constable's wife: Get up, quickly. I think some theives have entered our house.

Constable: Oh, shut up, will you? Don't you know I'm not on duty just now?

*Niti Srivastava*

## HELD OVER

The next part of "MAGIC AND MAGICIANS" together with a new feature on magic, and the Science-Fiction, "MAROONED ON A METEOROID", will appear in the January 1979 issue.

# HERBERT SUTCLIFFE :

## The Great Opener

**C**RICKET lost another of its all-time greats with the recent demise of Herbert Sutcliffe, at the age of 83. Sutcliffe's exploits over 22 yards of turf are legion, and many of his records (more particularly the ones established in partnership with his equally famous friend and partner, Jack Hobbs) remain unsurpassed to this day.

Between 1924 and 1935, he represented his country on 54 occasions with great distinction, opening the English innings as a matter of course. A stir of anticipatory delight reverberated throughout the cricket fields of England whenever Hobbs and Sutcliffe strode out to open the innings together. Out there in the middle, the opposition was less enthusiastic. The pair opened on 38 occasions, and posted together the first hundred, 15 times—a world record. Figures speak for themselves: their average for the first wicket stand works out at 87!

Born at Summerbridge in 1894, Sutcliffe's first-class career did not commence until after the First World War. Success was instantaneous: 1,839 runs at an average of 44.85 in 1919, and by 1924 he had outstripped all rivals to join Jack Hobbs in the English team as an opening batsman.

In their very first partnership, against South Africa at Birmingham, the pair put on 134, Sutcliffe contributing 64. At Lord's, England reached a record 268 when their first wicket fell, Sutcliffe with 134. A fine 83 in the third Test made him a certainty for the tour to Australia and cricket immortality.

In nine Test innings, he scored 734 runs at 81.55—his sequence of scores reading 59 and 115, 176 and 127, 33 and 59, 143, and 22 and 0. At Melbourne, Hobbs and Sutcliffe defied the Australian attack from noon to 6 p.m., scoring 283 together in that time—the first and only instance when no wicket has fallen in a full day's play.

Sutcliffe's run-getting ability scarcely showed any sign of letting up when the

Australians visited England in 1926, his scoreline being 13 not out, 82, 26, 94, 20, 76 and 161: second in the averages with 472 runs at 78.66. In the deciding Test at the Oval, Australia led by 22 runs in the first innings. Negligible as the lead was, a tremendous thunderstorm flooded the ground, transforming the wicket into a vile 'sticky' one. Experts in the pavilion, ex-internationals for the most part, wagged their heads sagely, and predicted that England would be lucky to get into three-figures. But, Hobbs and Sutcliffe had other ideas when they marched out to open the innings. Whilst Hobbs, 'the Master', attacked vigorously, Sutcliffe kept his end intact, grinding the viperish bowling to the dust. When the first wicket fell, the score-board registered 172—Hobbs out for exactly 100. Sutcliffe relentlessly carried on the fight before being out for a personal score of 161 in the last over of the day, an achievement that clinched victory for England by 289 runs.

If anything can match this first wicket partnership, one of the most remarkable in cricket history, it was a repeat performance two years later by the same pair in much the same conditions. At Melbourne, in 1928, Australia scored 397 to which England replied with 417, Sutcliffe getting 58. Australia answered with 351, and on a wearing wicket, England were set to score 332 for victory. To confound matters further, it began to rain in torrents turning the track viciously sticky. England won eventually by three wickets, a result made possible by the marvellous batsmanship of the opening pair which weathered the early storm when the wicket was at its most spiteful. The century partnership was posted, when Hobbs left for a well-made 49. Sutcliffe carried on the fight inexorably to notch an absolutely chanceless 135 in six hours and a half, remaining at the crease for all but 14 of the 332 runs needed for victory. On such memorable feats does the fame of Herbert

Sutcliffe rest.

Sutcliffe next turned his attention in 1929 to the South Africans against whom he enjoyed a feast of runs: 114 at Birmingham was followed by an innings of 100 at Lord's while a double triumph awaited him at the Oval, where he collected 104 and 109 not out in two outings. Against the Australians, in 1930, he again scored prolifically, getting 58 in the first Test, 74 in the fourth and finishing off with two superb knocks of 161 and 54 in the last, heading the English averages with 436 at 87.30.

In 1931, one of the wettest seasons on

most a habit with him, carried the English batting on his shoulders with the active and able support of Walter Hammond. In the first Test, he got 194, his highest innings in Test cricket, but had a lucky escape with his score at 42 when a ball ricocheted from his bat onto the stumps but failed to dislodge the bails. Australia won the second Test but Sutcliffe top-scored in both innings with 52 and 33, and after a two innings failure in the third game, came back to collect 86 in the fourth and 56 in the fifth, heading the Test (440 at 55.00) as also the tour (1,318 at 73.20) averages.



A sequence full of suspense when Sutcliffe was batting.

record, Sutcliffe headed the first-class batting averages with 96.96, a performance which would have been beyond the pale of even Bradman. Next year, he was at his best as a run-getter, collecting 3,336 at 74.13, before embarking on the 1932-33 'Bodyline' tour to Australia.

Jack Hobbs had retired in 1930 and it was soon obvious that Sutcliffe and the England eleven missed his genius sorely. The series was, however, won by the fast bowling of Harold Larwood, Bill Voce, and Gubby Allen, who pulverised the Australian batting with a mixture of blistering speed and accuracy. Sutcliffe, as had become al-

He played his last Test against Australia in 1934 (304 runs at 50.66 in the series) and then retired from the Test scene. In 54 Tests, he scored 4,555 runs at the remarkable average of 60.73, a fact made all the more remarkable when we consider that the majority of his contests were fought out against the best that Australia could offer.

Sutcliffe, like Bradman, was a solitary man with a solitary aim: to score as many runs as possible. He was a remorseless run-getter, and the concentration he brought to bear on his job of opening the innings was really wonderful.

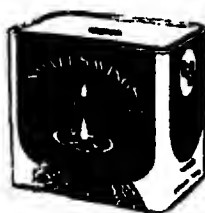
*Mahiyar D. Morawalla*

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YOU A LONG  
WAY**



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# SHANKAR'S

## INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S COMPETITION 1978

### Rules

1. Children all over the world can participate in Shankar's International Children's Competition 1978.
2. Only children below 16, i. e., those born on or after January 1, 1963, can participate in the Competition.
3. Each entry should be accompanied by a certificate from the parent/guardian or teacher that it is the original and unaided work of the competitor during 1978.
4. Each entry should carry the following details. These must be written in BLOCK LETTERS and in ENGLISH, on the back of the painting or at the end of the written work, as the case may be:
  - i) Full name of the competitor
  - ii) Full address
  - iii) Date of birth
  - iv) Nationality
  - v) Whether boy or girl
  - vi) Subject/Title of the entry

Entries which do not carry these details will not be considered.

5. Entries by more than one competitor can be sent together.
6. Entries should be addressed to :

Shankar's International Children's Competition  
Nehru House  
4 Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
New Delhi 110002  
India

Entries should reach the above address on or before December 31, 1978. Competitors from countries other than India are advised to despatch their entries well in advance to allow sufficient time for transit by surface mail.

8. Entries will NOT be returned.

#### Paintings/Drawings

Paintings or drawings may be done in any media, except black lead pencil.

10. The size of the painting or drawing should NOT BE LESS than 30 cm x 40 cm (12" x 16").
11. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries. They must be sent unmounted.
12. Paintings or drawings may be on any subject the competitor has seen or is interested in.

13. Combined work will not be accepted.

#### Written Work

14. Only entries in ENGLISH will be considered.
15. A competitor may submit upto 6 entries.
16. Entries may be in the form of essays, short stories, poems, plays, descriptive writings, etc.
17. The written work may be on any subject the competitor has seen or is interested in.

#### Prizes

18. The award of prizes will be decided by the organisers of the Competition with the help of a panel of judges.
19. The painting or drawing adjudged the best will be awarded the President of India's Gold Medal. The Vice-President of India's Gold Medal will be given for the best written work. Besides the above, it is proposed to award 48 gold medals, including 24 Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Gold Medals, and over 400 prizes and 400 Silver Medals for the next best entries. All paintings selected for the Shankar's International Children's Art Exhibition will receive Certificates of Merit.

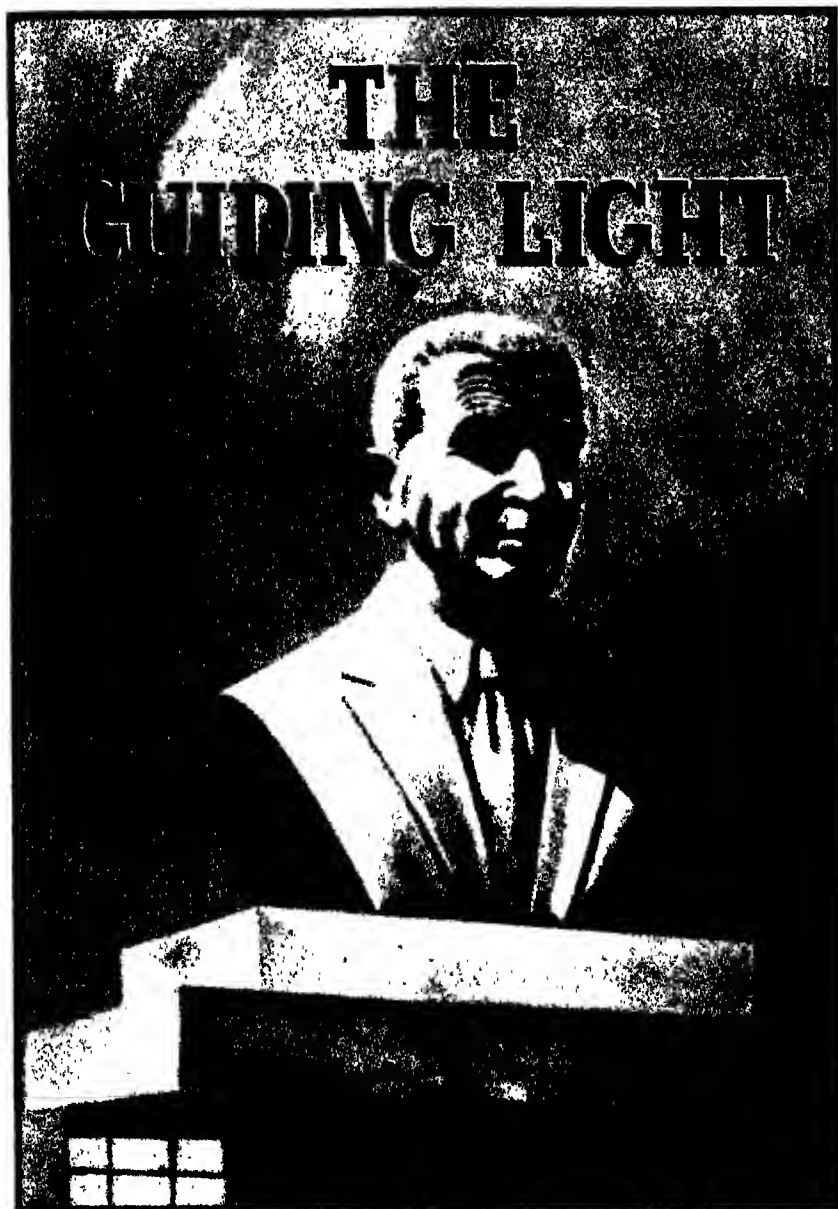
As 1979 is to be celebrated as International Year of the Child, the organisers also propose to invite the top prizewinners between 10 and 16 years of age from different countries to receive their prizes in person at the Prize Distribution function to be held in Delhi in November 1979. Their passage and stay expenses will be met by the organisers.

20. No competitor will be awarded more than 2 prizes.
21. The copyright of all entries will rest with the Shankar's International Children's Competition.
22. Among paintings, all those which win prizes other than Silver Medals, and among written entries, all those awarded prizes and a few winning Silver Medals will be published in "Shankar's Children's Art Number Volume 30". Some selected entries will also be published in the "Children's World".
23. All competitors can get "Shankar's Children's Art Number Volume 30" at half-price. (Rs. 15 for competitors from India only). Any competitor can reserve a copy.

NOTE: Vol. 30 is expected to be ready for mailing in December 1979.

REGISTERED No. D-(C)-214

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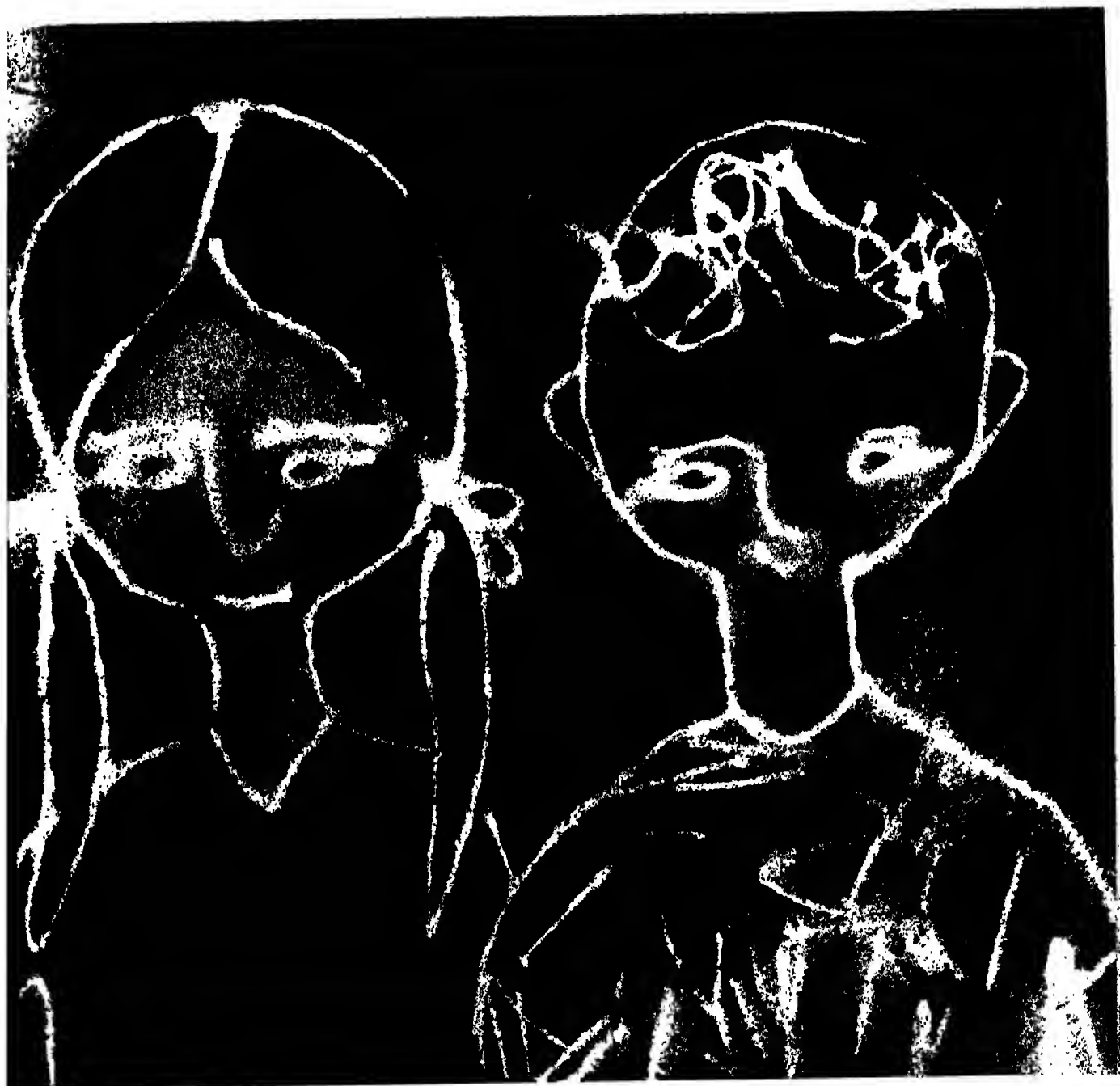
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JANUARY 1979

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# CHILDREN'S World

PUBLISHED EVERY MONTH  
JANUARY 1979 VOL. XI NO. 10

1979 International  
Year of the Child

Chief Editor  
SHANKAR

Editor  
K. RAMAKRISHNAN

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Cover: "Brother and Sister" by Salome Vinodbhai Patel (12) India

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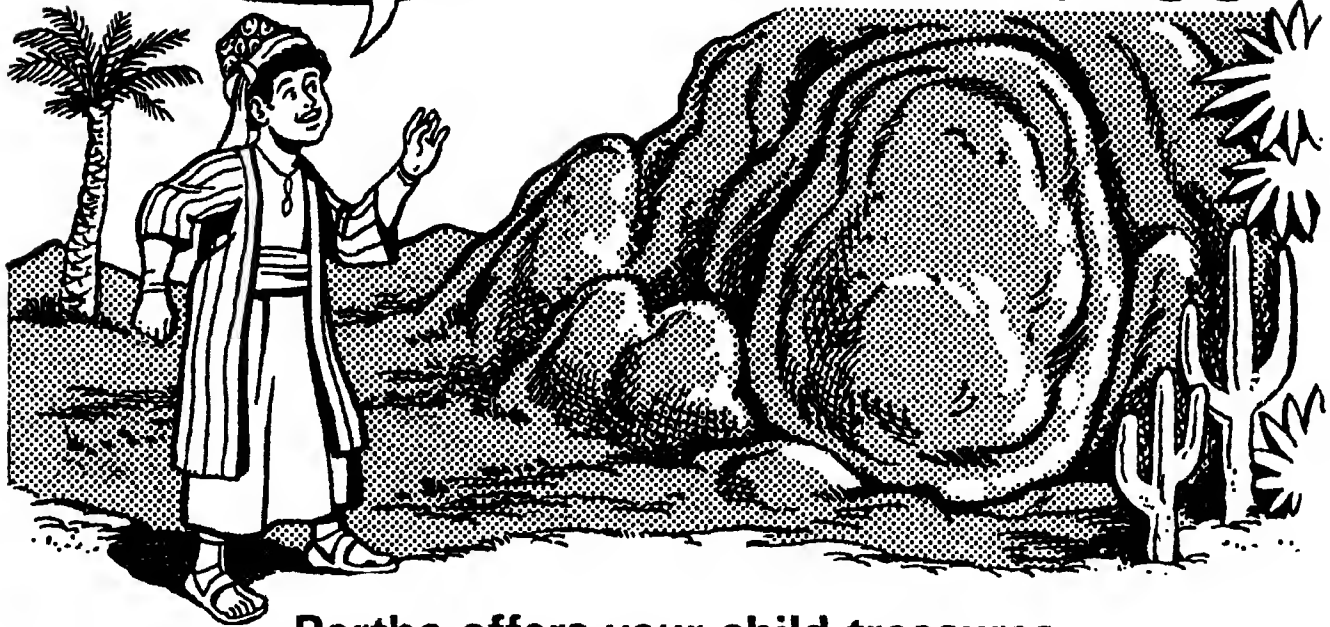
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# THE KITCHEN GOD

**I**N the Chinese pantheon of the more homely and popular gods was the kitchen deity. He was once a poor mason, who was continually dogged by ill-luck, so that it seemed he would always be poor and unsuccessful. At last, when all his ventures failed, and his hard work came to nothing, he became so poor that he was compelled to sell his wife in marriage to another man.

One day, he went to work for the man who had married his wife, but did not recognise her, as she was so beautifully and richly dressed. The good woman, however,

knew him at once, and as she still cared for him, resolved to help him. But she could not do so openly, as her new husband would have been jealous and forbidden it; so she decided to do it by stealth.

She baked some sesame cakes, and put a coin into each one, for now she was quite rich. When her first husband came to take leave, after finishing his work, she gave him the cakes, without revealing herself or what she had done. As he thanked her and departed, her heart rejoiced for being able to help the unfortunate man.



On his way home, the mason stopped at a roadside teahouse for some refreshments. Here he met another traveller, and the two soon started talking, as travellers often do, to relieve the tedium of their journey. The man asked the mason for one of his cakes. Being a kind fellow, he was only too glad to oblige his new friend, and gave him the cake. When the traveller bit into it, he found the coin.

Being a crafty man, he did not mention it to the mason. Instead, he talked on and on, and sympathised so freely with the mason's troubles that, when he offered to buy the rest of the cakes for a small sum of money, to help the mason, the latter gladly agreed.

Congratulating himself on his good for-

tune, the mason continued on his way. However, he soon learnt the truth and in utter despair killed himself. But the Celestial Emperor took pity on him, and instead of condemning him to be a Kuei (evil spirit), appointed him the kitchen god, for his goodness and honesty.

People invoked his name in times of domestic trouble, and he presided over their health. On New Year's Day, his duty was to report on the faults of the people. As such, the offerings made to him consisted of honey and sticky sweets to seal his lips! Thus the poor mason was immortalised into a god.

*Geeta Chowdhry*

## **"COVER STORY"**

**I**T'S 1979 already! And this time, it's not just an ordinary New Year — it's the International Year of the Child. A whole year, just for us — children!

That's what this month's cover is all about, actually. Brother and Sister — all of us, not just here in India but all over the world, are brothers and sisters. But as we grow older, it becomes very hard to accept this — this is the cause for all the hatred and unhappiness in the world. If we learn to love all the people in the world, irrespective of the colour of their skin or their language or religion or nationality, the world will become the beautiful place it's meant to be.

The International Year of the Child.....our year. But remember that many children don't have loving parents and a wonderful home like you and I do. In India, unwanted and neglected children, are so common that we in our contentment carelessly tend to forget their suffering. But the Year of the Child has been declared to remind us all that all children have equal rights, and those of us who are lucky enough to enjoy them must make sure that our less privileged brothers and sisters enjoy them, too.

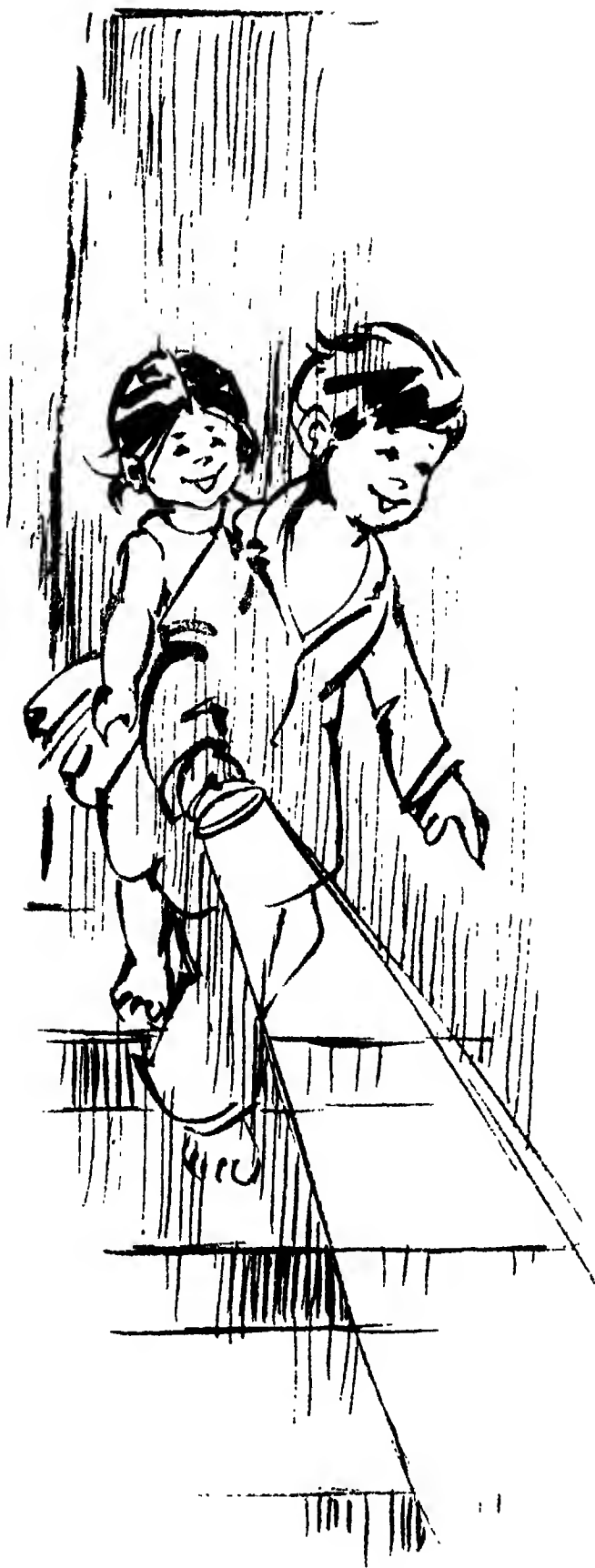
What a beautiful painting we have on the cover this month. I liked its simplicity very much — the plain white outlines, the uncomplicated, though pretty, shading. And there's nothing 'definite' about the two children — we

can't say definitely: 'these are rich children', 'these are poor children', 'these are children from a village', 'these are children from a city', 'these are white or black or brown children from such-and-such a country'. They are just a brother and a sister, and they seem to shine out the background of semi-darkness. I thought that was very symbolic, especially because of this year. But what I liked best was the care which the artist has put into her painting; she must have cared for it so much, it must have meant so very much to her. Don't you think we should have the same kind of feeling for 1979, our very own year, and make it as beautiful as the painting on the cover?

January is a very important month for India — can you tell me why? I think I can hear thousands of replies all together! Yes, January is important to India because India became an independent sovereign republic on the 28th day of this month 28 years ago. Republic Day is the day when long and jubilant parades are taken out, not just in Delhi but all over the country. And thousands of children like you and I and the two on the cover will crowd along the paths of the parade (or at least in front of the nearest television set) and watch the floats go by, right?

So here's wishing you all a very happy parade, a very happy January, and a very, very happy New Year.

*M.P.S.*



“NANIMAA, just one more story please, only one. After that I’ll go to sleep. I promise.”

This was the fifth or sixth time Munuaa had said that to his grandmother, and she knew very well that he would keep repeating that each time she finished telling him a story. So she was firm this time. “Nothing doing. To bed, I said, and to bed you shall go. Come on, Isha, leave that doll alone now and go to sleep,” she said turning to her grand-daughter. “Whoever heard of children keeping awake till 10 o’clock at night? I wonder what your mother will say when she hears of this. If this is the way you are going to behave, I am afraid I’ll have to tell her not to send you here for a holiday again.”

“Aw, Nanimaa, there’s no school tomorrow. Ma’s particular only on school days,” said Munuaa.

“No ‘kool, no shleep, shleep,” lisped Isha, Munuaa’s baby sister.

Granny could barely keep herself from smiling. ‘After all, they are only kids,’ she thought.

Isha and Munuaa always looked forward to their vacations. Nanimaa was their favourite. She would make lovely things for them to eat. Once in a while, Nanimaa would pack up lots of sandwiches, buns, pastries, and a few bottles of lemonade and let them have a picnic all by themselves in the garden.

Grandfather, too, was great fun. He took them for long walks and arranged lots of parties. He played with them and taught them a new game everyday.

‘I wonder why Nanimaa is acting so difficult today,’ thought Munuaa as he climbed up the stairs. Isha tottered up behind him, mumbling something to herself.

# MIDNIGHT PROWLERS



Nanimaa heaved a sigh of relief. "Nice, lovable children, no doubt, but BRATSI!" she added affectionately.

As the clock struck eleven, Munuaa turned around and nudged his sister. She got up, rubbing her eyes.

"Don't tell me you fell asleep, stupid. Now don't look surprised. Have you forgotten our plan? Nanimaa must be fast asleep by now! Let's go!"

"Fantas! Fantas!" clapped Isha joyfully.

"Quiet! Where's the torch? Now follow me."

They climbed down the stairs, tiptoed past Nanimaa's room, through the kitchen, into the drawing room.

"Hold my hand and don't trip." Munuaa's voice seemed business like in the dark.

Poor Isha was scared. "What if a hand shot out from the dark and caught me? What if a rat climbed into my pyjamas? Didn't Chotu say once that a rat had got into his pants?" Finally she said, "Dada, Isha nani get up. Isha 'fraid."

"You spoilsport, you..." her brother almost screamed. He then switched on the night lamp and both of them felt better. For Munuaa, too, was feeling slightly weazy. He then took out the ludo he had tucked under his shirt, and started playing with his sister. They were thoroughly excited by the idea. Isha pulled out a cheese cube from her pocket and a few peanuts, which she reluctantly shared with her brother.

"Wherever did you manage to get that from?" he asked her.

"Night, Isha no cat. Isha put pocket. Isha goo' girl."

"Shut up! Speak softly."

Munuaa and Isha had a grand time indeed. They played ludo, and snakes and ladders, and now and then tiptoed into the kitchen and smuggled in something to eat.

The clock struck twelve. Munuaa yawned. It was long past his bed time. Isha noticed it. "Dada, shleepy, Dada, shleepy. Isha, no shleep," she teased him. But Munuaa did not hear, for he had already fallen asleep on the couch. Isha also snuggled close to him and shut her eyes.

Munuaa heard a click and footsteps enter the house. Someone switched on the light and at once switched it off—apparently to

signal an 'All clear'. Then he locked the kitchen door and walked towards granny's room. Munuaa was terrified.

"Thief!" he screamed.

Isha woke up with a start.

"Quick, get up, Isha, there's a thief in the house. We've been locked in."

Isha began to cry.

"Stop it, Sissy. Think up something," he



scolded her. Then he rushed to the window and saw the chowkidar.

"Thief! Thief!" he shouted at the top of his voice.

The chowkidar rushed towards them and asked what the matter was. He banged on the front door, but found it locked from inside. He tried all the doors but couldn't get in. Hearing the noise, their grandfather and grandmother rushed towards the drawing room. They could hear Munuaa screaming, "Careful, Nanimaa, he'll kill you. I saw him. He's bad. He locked us in, too."

They opened the drawing room door, and were surprised to find the children locked inside. Grandmother was almost in tears. She thought they were being kidnapped. She hugged them and kissed them, while they narrated their story. Meanwhile, their grandfather and the chowkidar looked through all the rooms, hoping to catch the 'Thief'. But they found no one. Grandfather was furious. He came into the drawing room just when Munuaa was saying, "...and he switched on the light, then switched it off, and locked us in. He then went towards your room. We were terrified and so we called in the chowkidar."

"Oh, so, that is what the commotion is about. Now I know who the thief is," Grandfather answered.

"Who...o...o?" shivered Granny.

"It's me," finished Grandfather.

"Bu...but....," began Munuaa.

"Now first say sorry to the chowkidar whom you have bothered in the middle of the night, and then apologise to your Nanimaa for disobeying her. And, then, young man, you owe me an apology, too, for calling me a thief. In fact, I went for an important dinner and told your Nanimaa I would be coming home late. I just came in and switched on the light to see if all the windows and doors were closed. I did not want to wake up your Nanimaa and so had taken the keys with me. I hadn't told you children all that, because I didn't think it was neces-

sary. But now you know. Go right up to your room and straight to bed," Grandfather sounded very annoyed.

Munuaa took hold of his sister's hand and went back to their room, giggling all the way up.

*Navin Anand*

## PRANKS OF A 13-YEAR-OLD BOY

The pranks of a thirteen-year-old

Show that he is so very bold,

Though they trouble us such a lot,

He says he finds no other resort.

He tries to abstain from study,

By saying it makes him feel giddy,

He never, never tries to learn,

Even if his parents become stern.

He finds great pleasure in mischief,

Which he does like a sly thief;

He tries to get away and does succeed,

Leaving others to decide who's done  
the deed.

Even in school he tends

To be a great nuisance;

He always teases his small little friends,

Making them think he's without sense.

So mischievous is he, that his parents  
do fear,

Many a complaint they would have  
to hear;

Yet, they cannot have their say,

But can only wait for the day

When their son acquires some sense,

Leaving behind his ignorance.

*T.S. Narayanan (14)  
India*

# TIGER-MOUSE

**M**ANY hundred years ago, there lived a hermit who possessed tremendous magical powers, and was, for this reason, known far and wide by the name of Plenteous Power.

One day, as Plenteous sat near his hut, he saw a crow in flight drop a baby mouse from its beak. The magician, filled with compassion for even the smallest things in creation, rushed and picked the mouse up and carried the pitiful thing lovingly back to his hut. There he nursed and fed the little thing as if it were his child.

One day, not long after this, the tiny mouse was spied by a hungry cat who chased it mercilessly, hoping to gobble it up. When the compassionate Plenteous saw this, he was again moved by his love for the wee creature and wished to protect him from the cat. So, mustering up his magic powers, he changed the mouse into a cat, bigger than the one that chased him.

Then the trouble began. For the cat who had been a mouse now became afraid of dogs. So Plenteous was once again compelled to change it into a dog. But this dog, who had been a cat, who had been a mouse, now became desperately afraid of tigers. And so the sage, with the same magic powers, was finally compelled to relieve his fear by changing him into a fierce and brave tiger.

But even that was not the end of the trouble. For Plenteous still treated the gigantic mouse-tiger as a mouse, and he was not the only one who looked upon the mouse-tiger as a mere mouse. For, whenever any of the neighbours saw the mouse-tiger, they would cry out laughingly, "Hey! Look at the tiger! He was put together by the wise and holy Plenteous Power from bits of a cowardly mouse."

When the tiger, who had been a dog, who had been a cat, who had been a mouse, heard this, he was angry, and he thought,



'As long as this Plenteous Power lives, I will be disgraced by these taunts about my mousy nature. There is only one way to stop this.' And reflecting thus, he hatched a plan to kill the magician who had been his benefactor.

As soon as these murderous thoughts entered the mouse-tiger's head, the magician knew all about them. He approached the tiger and sternly commanded: "CHANGE BACK INTO A MOUSE!" And sure enough, the tiger who had been a dog, who had been a cat, who had been a mouse, became a mouse once again.

Thus it is said: "When mousy persons are turned into paper tigers, they will try to destroy all those who helped them attain power."

*(An Indian legend retold by N. M. Khilnani)*

# EYES THAT SPOKE



**“O** OH! Please keep your dog away! Have you chained him? Is the door shut?” Where is he?

Where he always is—under my bed, growling and gnashing his teeth, as though saying, ‘How awful people are, they don’t even let me greet them, let alone sit with them.’

And, so it happens everytime there are guests. Oskar is grabbed by the scruff of his neck, picked up if necessary, and locked in. All because the Mrs. Ahuja’s or Nath’s of the world do not want their saris ‘contaminated’! They say, they are scared of animals.

These ladies call themselves human. They are supposed to be able to ‘think’ and reason. Yet, they stay a mile away from anything that does not resemble them. For them, a dog is just ‘dirty, dumb, and dangerous’.

Oskar is a small dog with a fluffy tail. He has a white coat and an adorable face, through which peer a pair of beautiful, big, black eyes that express more than words ever can. And when he cocks his head to one side, rests his chin on my knees, and looks at me with those adorable eyes, he seems warmer and friendlier than any human being.

If I’m alone, or depressed about something, I often talk to Oskar, whose eyes seem to say “Don’t worry, I’m here to look after you”

In fact, just relating my problems to him and getting them off my chest cheers me immensely. And, though he cannot speak, one big lick reassures me the world is not such a bad place after all!

Oskar needs company, like most of us do, and then he’s happy. He doesn’t growl or snap at me when I touch him. He loves to be stroked on his head gently. He needs to be loved just as much as all of us do.

But how many of us really understand these animals? We keep them as watchdogs, bathe and feed them, and then chain them to the gate everytime they want to play—for fear that they may spoil the lawn!

It’s these so-called ‘thinking’ humans who behave more like animals. Not once have they given Oskar a chance to show them that all he wants is to say ‘Hello’. Not once have they ‘thought’ that he might be warm and friendly and wish to be treated as such.

At times, I wonder if Oskar and I have the same problems. He wants to be accepted the way he is—I want the same. In a way, we are both helpless and perhaps that is why we revel in each other’s company.

One day turned out to be a rare experience for both of us. Two ‘sophisticats’, Mrs. Khanna and Mrs. Chopra, came to our house, draped in their best outfit and glittering diamonds. No sooner had they opened the gate than Oskar ran to the door, barking.

As always, my mother asked the servant to take Oskar inside. But this time, I couldn’t resist any longer. Out of my room I dashed and warned the servant not to touch Oskar—assuring him at the same time that he would not get into any trouble with ‘mem-sahib’ for doing so.

Then, quickly, I went to Oskar and whispered, “Today I’m not going to allow you to be chained. Just show these ‘cats’ what you really are.”

By that time the two ladies had stepped into the drawing room and were just about



to sit down when I let an exuberant Oskar, who could hardly believe his new found freedom, loose.

Wagging his tail furiously, Oskar headed straight for the fat 'cat'. He jumped as high as he could, to give her a lick on her cheek.

"O-o-o Ow-c-e-k-s" yelled Mrs. Chopra. "I've never let a dog come near me and now, ugh! what am I going to do?"

I was in splits of laughter. 'Serves her right.'

To avoid a similar ordeal, Mrs. Khanna picked up a peg-table. Oskar, of course, was going to lick everyone. So once again he jumped up and just then something terrible happened. Before I could say or do anything, Mrs. Khanna flung the table on him.

Yelping and cringing with pain, Oskar fell flat on his back. Then he got up and ran out

of the house, with his tail between his legs. I chased him and tried to hold him back, but so frightened was he that no one could stop him.

He had been hurt, confused, and scared away. For four days there was no trace of Oskar. We looked for him all over the colony and in the neighbouring colonies, but it was no use.

Then, one night, as I was taking a walk in the garden, I saw a small brown lump at the gate. My heart skipped a beat as I ran towards it.

Oskar was back. His head was hanging down and he was caked with mud. I called out his name, but he just walked into the house and hid under the bed. He never looked up at me with those adorable eyes—again.

*Navkala Singh*



# I SOLVE A MURDER

(Diary of a latchkey child)

MY NAME IS PETER RENOLD

*Saturday, August 5, 1978*

I am six years old today. Today we had gone to Hamleys for my birthday. I bought a bird made of a sort of paper that flies and a mechanical dolphin that can swim in the tub and a football for my brother and me that is a joint present. My mother bought us some books.

*Wednesday, October 25, 1978*

Today I have to buy three quarter pound of mincemeat with 50p.

*Thursday, October 26, 1978*

Today it's cold. I walked my mother to the tube station and bought her ticket for her then I walked back. I had on shorts. I was shivering. There were many people buying their groceries. Later on I washed the dishes. The water was hot. Later on I sat down and tried to search for our diaries. I found them. There is still a strong wind.

*Friday, October 27, 1978*

Today my mother gave me money to buy a comic. When I came home my brother bounced me. It's quite boring here. When we lived in Trinidad we had a dog. The dog's name was Jackie. We gave him to some people because he would not like it in a flat. I wish he

was here. I don't like it in a flat myself particularly. We were going to see him in our holiday but we can't afford it so we went to Madame Tussauds and the Planetarium and things like that. It was quite interesting.

*Saturday, October 28, 1978*

Today it was quite boring. We watched The Flower Pot Men then my brother said right now it's clobbering time and bounced me. We read comics. Later on Igor came. We made a date to go swimming at two o'clock. We had quite a lot of fun. We bought buns and butter on the way. We came home late so did my mother. There were a few good programmes on TV.

*Friday, November 3, 1978*

Today we were quite late in leaving our house. We managed to get to school in time. I bought two comics and I had to buy my lunch today. I bought two ham sandwiches and two roast beef and four packets of chips. Then I walked home. Today I felt bored. There was nothing to do today. Nobody came home till late. I got out some comics and started to read. Then I got out my ball and started to roll it around. Then I got out my quilt and covered up because I was feeling cold. Then I started to paint a picture with

a brown crayon. Then I looked through our window into another flat opisit. In one room some people were dancing about perculiarly. Some were whiteys and some were West Indians. In another room I suppose the kitchen a West Indian man was drinking. Then a lady came into the room they had a fight she fell down then he came out from the window.

Then my father came home from the factory I took my homework book to him and asked him to tell me how to do a type of sum. He explained. It took a long time for me to fully understand the sum. Later on I looked at the TV it was quite good.

*Saturday, November 4, 1978*

Today an exciting thing happened. First my brother came home After that we were looking at television then we saw a police car come into the square and an ambulance. A stretcher came out from the flat opposit my brother says it was a dead person on the stretcher I was worried in case it was the West Indian lady I decided to tell my mother when she came home.

*Monday, November 6, 1978*

List of grossrics to buy:

4 tv dinners

2 soap

1 biling chicken

4 different kinds of vegetable

some apples and fruit

some baps

4 packets of potato chips

and 15p is a tip for me I decided to buy some likerice sticks a lot come for 15p.

*Tuesday, November 7, 1978*

I am starting a Murder Club with Igor our password is BLOOD.

*Wednesday, November 8, 1978*

Today we went to Holland Park. My brother took pictures with our camera that we got from the ice lolly coupons that we saved up. I did not like ice lollies much He said it was my duty to eat them. Igor and I planned our

Murder Club My brother tried to listen in.

*Thursday, November 9, 1978*

Since many days I've had no piece since I keep worrying if the police will get me because I saw the West Indian person knock the West Indian lady down. My mother came home quite early today. When she was cooking I told her he said let me sit down and listen carefully She got the papers in that it said the lady was murdered I though it was a accident. In the papers it says she was a West Indian persons wife the serprising thing is they said her murder was white there must be some mistake. My mother got her coat and we went to the police stashun My father and brother had not yet come home we left a note.

*Friday, November 10, 1978*

Today we went to the picture called The Water Babies It was about some children. I didn't like it My mother and father and brother all came Yesterday we had been to the police stashun I explained to the sarjent he was very perlite which was a enornus relief. Then we caught the tube home it was quite cold.

We are not going to keep up our Murder Club. I think the idea is silly. I ent out this artickle to keep as a sooveneer. The small boy is me, see?

*Newspaper clipping*

## **PRIMARY SCHOOL BOY SOLVES MURDER**

Fullham Road, Friday 10, 1978. The drink cum-drugs party on the 3rd of this month that ended in the stabbing to death of Mrs. Kate Emmanuel, 26, in a flat on Fullham road, was given a surprise solution today when a small boy (name withheld), 6, of West Indian origin, accompanied by his mother, told detectives how he watched the murder through the window of his ground floor flat, directly opposite. He had not realised, until he talked it over with his mother yesterday, that it was murder he had seen.

It was a rainy Friday and the lad was alone at home, having walked back as usual from his



primary school (where his teacher describes him as 'extremely bright and responsible'). His parents were both still at work and his brother had not yet returned from his St. John's Wood grammar school. Finding time heavy on his hands, he gazed through the window of his room and actually watched the murder being committed. None of the guests (who reported the murder a day later, having admittedly got 'stoned out of their minds' when they discovered the body)

knew that Mr. Emmanuel, husband of the dead woman, had gained access to the kitchen. Subsequent to the boy's statement, the police arrested Mr. James Emmanuel, who later confessed. Mr. David Buckley, a good friend of the murdered woman at whose flat the body was discovered, and who had been helping the police with their enquiries, has since been released.

*Jennifer Prabhu*

## **My Most Embarrassing Moment**

**D**OING a wrong sum on the blackboard, with forty-three pairs of eyes watching you, may be as horrible as swallowing quinine. But to be embarrassed before a whole class of Seniors is, you will agree, even worse. Only in story-books have I read about absent-minded scatter-brained people, little knowing I was soon to join the gang.

It was the last day of school before the summer vacation. God knows how eagerly we had waited for this day. The examination-wave had come and gone. An unbelievable atmosphere of peace was felt throughout the school. Boys could be seen sitting in shady corners planning how to spend the summer holidays.

The period after 'Break' was Drawing. A period which we all enjoyed. Today the teacher had asked us to draw anything we liked. My friend and I lazily fished our drawing books from our desks. We were in no mood to draw. All of a sudden I heard a 'splash'. On looking out of the window just above my desk, I could see the school swimming team practising in the pool. Oh How we loved to watch them swim. At that moment my friend had a brainwave. We would ask the teacher for a drink of water and go to the swimming pool instead. The teacher did not object, and soon we were climbing down the staircase.

We were happily exclaiming how lucky we had been and how nice and cool it would be in front of the swimming pool when, all of a sudden, we heard the sound of heavy footsteps coming from below. We stood still in terror, fixed to our places, for we had

suddenly realized that the footsteps belonged no other than to the Headmaster who was coming on one of his rounds. The next instant we were fleeing towards our classroom. It seemed that our life depended on how fast we ran, for hadn't we seen the cane that always hung in his office? Luckily, our classroom doors were open and we shot into the class like terrified rabbits.

Instead of the low buzzing sound that could be heard from our drawing class, this class was strangely quiet but, of course, we did not notice this then. We ran to our desks. Surprisingly enough, a strange boy was already sitting at my desk. I looked around the classroom and lo! this was not my class at all! My friend was staring blank at me. The next instant the whole of class '9' D, including the teacher, was in peals of laughter. I had read about people turning red to the very roots of their hair and I imagined that if we had a mirror then, we would also have looked the same. After muttering a hasty apology to the teacher, I dragged my friend—who was still quite blank—out of the classroom.

Never before had I felt so safe in my own class. My teacher had been wondering why we were taking so long.

It is all right for you readers to laugh, but believe me, at the instant when I had realized I was in a wrong class, I had felt the ground slipping from below my feet. Have you ever experienced such "private earthquakes"?

*Udayan Ganguly (12)  
India*

## A DEBT REPAID-2

**D**RONACHARYA looked at the eager young faces about him. Arjuna with his earnest eyes. Yudhishtira with his look of grave concern. Bhishma bursting with curiosity. Duryodhana trying to look indifferent. There they all were—each reacting differently. But they were loyal. All of them. Dronacharya knew that. Once he demanded the 'guru dakshina' they owed him, not one of them would hesitate. But were they competent enough for the task? Were they old enough and skilled enough to be able to put out the fire that burned within his heart? The fire of revenge that had been seething in him all these months?

Drona's eyes sought and rested on Arjuna. How young he was and yet what determination marked his brows! He is like me, thought Dronacharya. Like I used to be, when I was his age. As he gazed at the boys around him, the years seemed to slip off, as if they had never existed, and Drona saw himself, a young lad once again.

He remembered his days as a little boy, living with his father, sage Bharadwaja. The quiet days at the hermitage. His daily visits to the palace of King Prishata of Panchal. Every memory was wrapped up with that of someone else, who followed him about like a shadow. Someone who was quite inseparable from him. Someone dearer to him than a brother. He was none else than Prince Drupada, the son of King Prishata.

King Prishata had noticed Drona's sharpness and brilliance, his knowledge of the scriptures. Moreover, he was the son of a great sage. He smiled upon the friendship of the two boys and encouraged it, too. Drona and Drupada were the best of friends, devoted to each other. Their days of childhood were soon over and it was time for them to qualify themselves as warriors. Sage Bharadwaja desired to send Drona to Maharshi Agnivesha. He spoke of it to King Prishata, who decided to send Drupada along with Drona. The boys were

overjoyed to know that they need not be parted but could start their new life together.

The days flew by like a dream. The two young friends, learning all they could from the great sage Agnivesha, became inimitable warriors and well versed in every scripture. They were no longer young lads, but had already stepped into the magic realm of manhood.

"Drona," said Prince Drupada, looking at his friend, "I shall soon be the king. I want you to share it all with me, just as we have shared everything together all these years."

"It's good of you, Drupada," said Drona, touched by his words. "But being a king will make a difference, you know!"

"I don't see why it should!" said Drupada. "After all, I shall remain the same man, even when I am the king."

"I am happy you have said it," said Drona. "Who knows I may come to you some day and remind you of your promise!"

"There won't be any need to remind me," said Drupada hotly. "And I don't see why we need to be parted at all. Aren't you coming back with me?"

"One never knows," said Drona sounding mysterious.

Drupada opened his mouth to refute, saw Drona's laughing face, and burst out laughing himself. "Drona, you've been joking all this time!" he said accusingly.

"I was," said Drona. "I can't really imagine you being any different from the dear friend you have always been!"

But in spite of all their promises and intentions, Drupada and Drona's future took them different ways. Drupada went back to his kingdom where he was crowned the king. Engulfed by his various kingly duties he found little time for anything else. Drona went back to his father's hermitage and lead a quiet life of scholarship and meditation. After a while, he remembered his father's request that he should marry on completing his education. He soon

married Kripec, the twin-sister of Kripacharya.

Despite their quiet life, Drona and Kripec were very happy, more so when a son was born to them. Drona had never cared for wealth or bothered about acquiring any. A life of want and hardship did not worry him and Kripec never complained. She managed with what there was and did not tell her husband how difficult it was to make both ends meet—especially with a child in the house. It was not in her nature to grumble, but it pained her very much to see her precious son Aswatthama going without so many essential things enjoyed by other children.

Aswatthama himself was too young to be aware of what he missed. He was a happy, contented child, only vaguely aware that

his friends possessed many things of which he knew nothing. But, one day, he was greatly intrigued by the sight of his friends drinking something white from a tumbler, something which appeared to be quite delicious! His mother never gave him any pretty drink like that.

"What is it that you are drinking?" he asked his friends curiously.

"Milk!" they said.

"Milk?" asked Aswatthama curiously. "What is it? What does it taste like?"

"Have you never tasted milk?" asked a friend, horrified.

"No," said Aswatthama in a small voice. "At least I don't remember it."

"Beggars' sons don't drink milk," jeered a friend. The others laughed and joined in the unkind teasing.

Aswatthama went home with a heavy



heart, wondering why he was so different from the others.

"Mother," he said, looking at Kripee. "Mother, why don't we drink milk like the others do?"

"Milk is expensive, darling," said his mother. "We can't afford it."

The next day, Aswatthama saw his friends drinking milk again. He looked on longingly, saying nothing.

"Want to drink some?" asked one of the boys. "Come, friends, let's give him some milk." They winked at each other and gave Aswatthama a tumbler of white liquid. Aswatthama drank it up eagerly and began to dance with joy. "I have tasted milk too!" he cried. "I've had milk!"

His friends clapped their hands and booed him mercilessly.

"Ho, beggar's son! That was only a trick!" they said.

"It was not milk at all!" said one with a laugh. "It was plain rice-flour mixed with water!"

"And you couldn't tell the difference!" they shouted. "Shame on you!"

Aswatthama was a little boy after all. He felt ashamed and ran home, his eyes full of tears. Kripee heard the story from him and began to cry, too. Just then Drona came in. He was astonished to find his wife and son in tears.

When he heard what it was all about, his brow cleared. "Why, my dear? There is no need to worry about our poverty anymore," he said, picking Aswatthama up in his arms. "We shall go to King Drupada. He loves me like a brother and we will find a place in his court."

But Drupada was quite drunk with power and riches. He refused to recognise Drona at all! "Me, the friend of a beggar like you?" he said scornfully. "Talk sense, man!"

"But your promise, Drupada!" cried Drona puzzled and hurt. "That promise to share your kingdom with me! Have you really forgotten it?"

Drupada roared with laughter. "If you are talking of some senseless prattle of a raw youth, then you are as well a fool as a beggar!" he cried. "How can there possibly be friendship between unequals? Are

you, in any way, my equal, beggar? The maximum I can grant you is a meal!"

Drona turned away without a word. 'I shall not forget this, Drupada,' he said to himself. That was months ago! And yet it hurt! The memory of his public humiliation singed his soul even today.

"My boys," said Drona, "get Drupada for me... alive! That is all I ask of you!"

*Swapna Dutta*

*(To be concluded)*

## THE VALLEY OF PARADISE

I trudged along, weary though,  
in search of paradise.  
The land of dreams, love, enchanting  
scent and eye-brimming sight.

But tarried I, paradise is found  
in heaven, now I lost the fight,  
Thirsty and weary so, fell prostrate  
on earth, unable to rise.

With parched throat, strained eyes,  
weak limbs lay I on a hill,  
Strength denied, how could I fulfil  
my venture, then I wept,  
But still dreaming of that glorious  
land, hesitating I slept,  
But thought I, a fool seeks a forbidden  
land, nay failed my will.

On instinct I roused to sweep  
the gaze down the maze,  
My eyes sparkled, with the joyous  
welcome it received,  
I rubbed my eyes in pure disbelief,  
for dreams may be cheating.

There lay my land of dreams,  
a combination of yellow and green haze,  
A valley full of nodding daffodils,  
whispering with the wind,  
my eyes are not deceived,  
Thirsty as I was, the throat,  
nostrils and eyes were quenched heartily  
eaten.

*T.P. Raveendranath*

# "Happy New Year, Chiritai?"

CHIRRUP opened one eye, surveyed the world, and hastily opened the other eye, too. Then he kicked off his quilt, ruffled his feathers, stretched himself, and stifled a yawn. He wore a coat over his pyjama top, put on thick woollen socks before slipping his feet into bedroom slippers. Then flippity flap, flap, he padded into his teenage sister Chiri's room. She slept with the quilt right over her head. Chirrup took off his floppy floppy bedroom slippers and tiptoed to Chiri's bed. Gently he pulled the quilt back, bent close over Chiri's head and yelled at the top of his voice, "Happy New Year, Chiritai." Chiri shot up in bed and screamed, "What's happened?"

"Get up, sleepy-head," said Chirrup. Then striking a ridiculous pose, he droned imitating his sister's poetry-reading tone. "It's a new year, and the day is yet young." Then he changed his pose, pretended he was a pop-singer and chirped, "The early bird gets the worm. . . . ." His song was cut short by Chiri's pillow, which came sailing through the air and knocked him down.

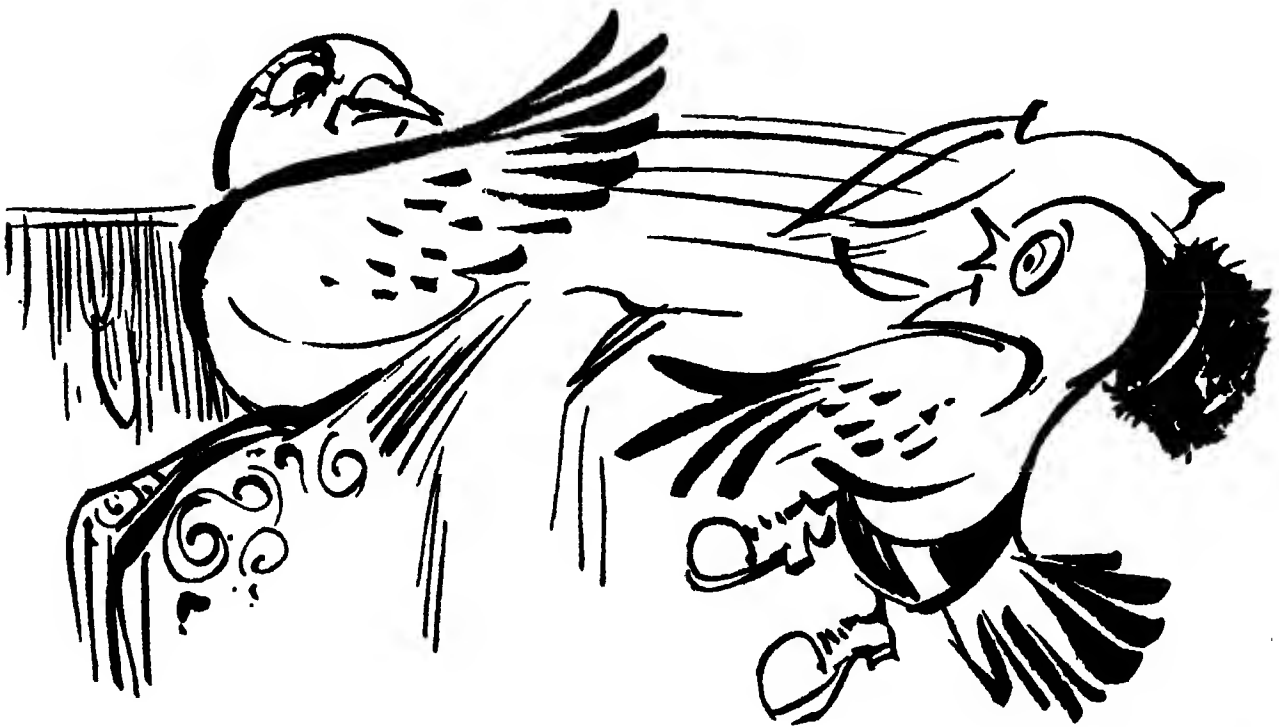
"... Worm, circus-clown," he heard as he got up and gasped for air. "Little brothers ought to be locked up, delinquent. Don't you know I've been dancing all night at 'The Nest'? Get lost, creep. If the New Year and the cold morning is making you so chirpy, go make breakfast for the family," came the steady mutter from his sister.

Chirrup sat on the edge of her bed and asked, "I say, sis, what time did you get back?" No answer. So he asked again, "I say, Chiritai, have you gone to sleep again?"

A most unlady-like grunt answered him. Chiritai's head appeared briefly. "I got back at 3 a.m., kid, and I want to sleep. So, will you please clear out?"

Chirrup stood up and with a serious face whispered, "Good night."

Chiritai managed a smile, which was enough for Chirrup to go on again. "Twang, twang!" he said strumming an imaginary guitar. "It's been a hard day's night, and I've been working like a dog." Before the head could emerge from under the quilt, he dashed out, only to fall over his slippers



which stood in the doorway. Did he hear a chuckle behind him? His sister seemed fast asleep under her ridiculous purple quilt. Chirrup picked himself up, rubbed his sore behind and padded into the kitchen. He gave up the idea of trying to wish his parents a Happy New Year at this hour of the day. He knew they had been celebrating it at the 'The Skylark' last night.

That's when he had drawn up a list of resolutions for the New Year. He had decided to be practical. There were no vague 'I'll be good', 'I'll study hard', 'I won't be a bully' resolutions this time. Instead, heading the list was 'I'll make my own bed', followed by 'I'll help Mummy to prepare the breakfast every morning'.

'Oh hell,' Chirrup muttered, as he peered into the fridge. 'That's one chore I've forgotten, I haven't made my bed.' He closed the fridge to go upstairs, but stopped short. 'The order does not matter, as long as I do all my chores. And breakfast should be ready today, before Ma and Pa come down.'

Let's see, there was the customary seed-cake his mother baked every year for the New Year breakfast. Should he just toast the bread and fry the eggs? That's everyday stuff. He must make something different. After all, it was a New Year, and it was the first time he was going to do something in the kitchen.

Could he make 'pulao'? Or a curry? But that'll be lunch. What other snacks are there in the world? Chirrup picked up the lids on pots and pans and dropped them back with a clatter. He opened jars and left the lids unscrewed. He stood on his toes and grasped a tin on the top-shelf. It seemed heavy and he lost his hold. The lid was loose, and the tin came tumbling down, the contents all over Chirrup. God! Chirrup stared at the mess on him, around him. It was Mom's castor sugar. He couldn't possibly put it back in the tin now! Should he run away? No, of course not. If he poured a bucket of water over it, it would wash away. 'Hey,' exclaimed Chirrup as he gazed at the castor sugar. 'That's the stuff Chiritai makes fudge out of. That's it, fudge for breakfast, tan-tara!' Chirrup cheered up. Humming to himself, he got busy.

He scooped all the castor sugar into a pan, picked up the tin, hammered the lid in place

and replaced it on the shelf. He knew Chiritai put a lot of butter in the fudge, but how much he didn't quite know. 'The more the better. Hee, hee!' So plop went the 500 gm brick of butter into the pan. Chirrup lit the gas and placed the pan on the gasring. 'Icky-sticky fudge foo, sticky toffee, I love you,' he sang. 'Where are the walnuts, tra, la-la, walnuts in the fudge. Icky-sticky fudgy foo. Walnut, walnut, where are you? And Chirrup opened kitchen cupboards which he didn't close. He peeked in jars, and tins, and baskets, and finally found some walnuts. He busied himself cracking the nuts to get the kernel, while the castor-sugar burned, and the butter, cold from the fridge, took its own time to melt. Chirrup got up, stirred the mixture, and cracked some more walnuts. When he had enough, he picked up the bowl and poured the crushed walnuts into the sugar and butter mixture that was frothing on the fire. He stamped on the walnut shells still scattered on the floor and exclaimed, 'What a groovy crunch-crunch sound.' He stirred the mixture of walnuts, sugar, and butter, and watched fascinated as the liquid stuff bubbled and hissed and got thicker and thicker. 'Icky-sticky, fudgy foo. . .', Chirrup said, 'Walnut fudge get ready soon.'

Too soon it started looking ready, only browner than what Chiritai's looked. But she poured her mixture onto a greased plate and then cut it into beautiful squares. Chirrup left the pan on the fire and splashed a spoonful of ghee on a steel plate. Without bothering to spread it evenly, he poured the half burnt fudge onto the plate. 'Yummy, that looks delicious,' Chirrup said to himself. 'Should I taste it? No, of course not, my first dish on the first day of the New Year. The honour of tasting it goes to my very lucky parents,' he said in a cricket commentator's voice.

'Now, you beautiful icky-sticky fudge, I'm going to cut you into neat little squares.' He took the knife and ran it through the mixture. It went in but wouldn't come out. He tugged and he pulled. The knife came out and with it came a long stringy, wiry length of fudge. 'Hurray!' shouted Chirrup. 'It's really nice and sticky.' He tried to remove the long length of fudge stuck on the knife. It was hot and got stuck on his feathers.



instead. 'Ooooh!' he shouted and shoved his arm inside the coat. There the fudge got stuck. He could feel it rubbing against his chest, but couldn't be bothered with it now. He was thinking of the praise his parents would shower on him once they tasted the fudge. He quickly rolled a few balls out of the fast cooling fudge and put them on a plate. With a real satisfactory grin, he took the plate and flip-flopped upstairs to his parents' room.

"Happy New Year, Mummy, Daddy," he sang to the tune of 'kadam badhaiye chal'.

His parents sat up in bed sleepily. "Happy New Year, beta," said his mother.

"Say no more, Mum and Dad, look I've got a New Year gift for both of you. Pop one into your mouth while I fetch Chiritai to share our New Year feast."

Chirrup's mother and father popped a ball of fudge each into their mouths. Chirrup returned with a grumbling and sleepy Chiritai. "Hi Mom, Hi Dad, Happy New Year, dears," said Chiritai sleepily. But there was no answer.

"Mum, can't you talk? At least say thank you for the fudge, won't you?" said Chirrup.

disappointed.

But their parents continued to sit like zombies in the bed.

"Mom, Dad, say something," persisted Chiritai.

Their parents opened their beaks in wide grins and tried to speak. Their jaws were locked tight with 'icky-sticky' fudge.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Chiritai. Chirrup rolled on the floor helpless, holding his stomach and laughing. "Oooh, hu, hu," he went, "oh it's so funny, Mum, Dad, ha . . . ha . . . ." He couldn't talk.

Suddenly, his father jumped out of bed, grabbed two balls of fudge and shoved them into Chirrup's mouth. 'Very funny, eh?' he seemed to ask. 'Let's see how funny you find this.'

"Hec, hee," cackled Chiritai.

Poor Chirrup. The whole day on January 1, he could eat nothing. He sucked, and he chewed the icky-sticky walnut fudge stuck in his beak. But one thing he did do. He tore the paper which had his New Year resolutions written on it—to shreds.

*Vaijayanti Savant*



# PUPPETS RELIVE HISTORIC VOYAGE

IT happened two hundred years ago.

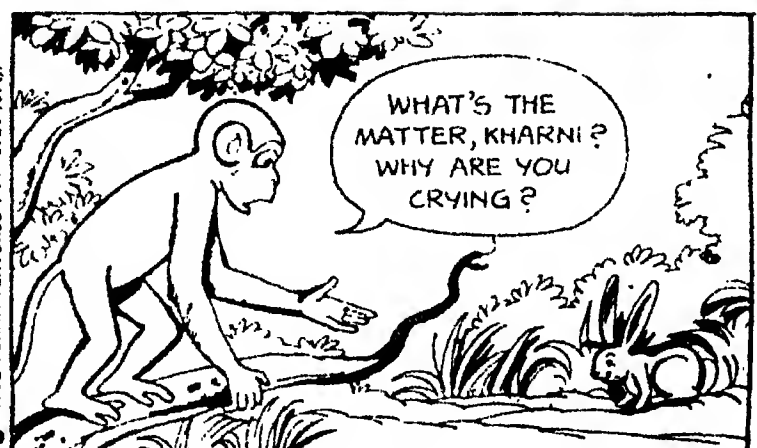
During his first voyage of discovery to the Pacific between 1768-71, the British navigator, Captain James Cook, discovered the east coast of Australia and took possession of the country for Britain.

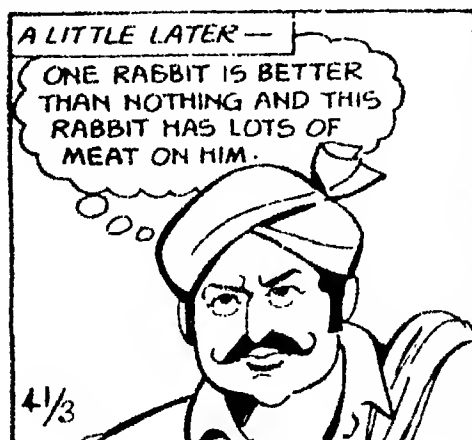
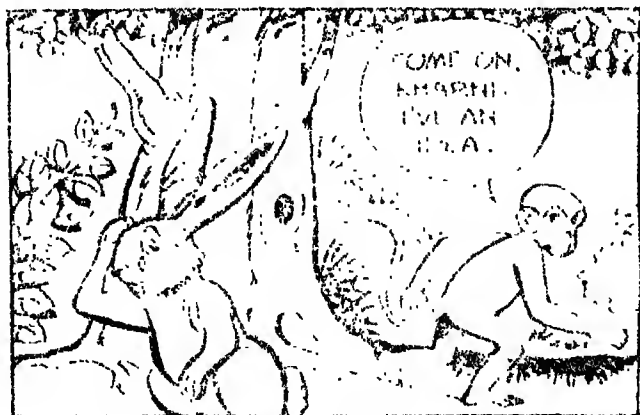
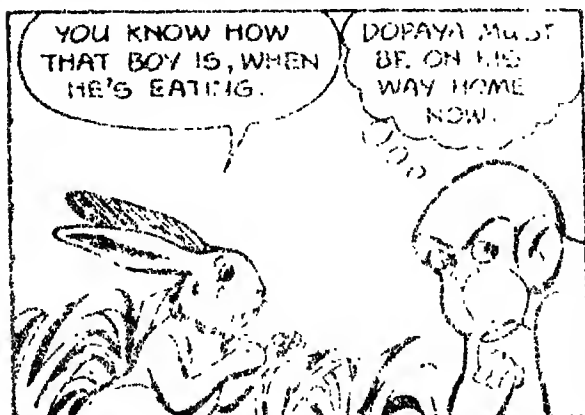
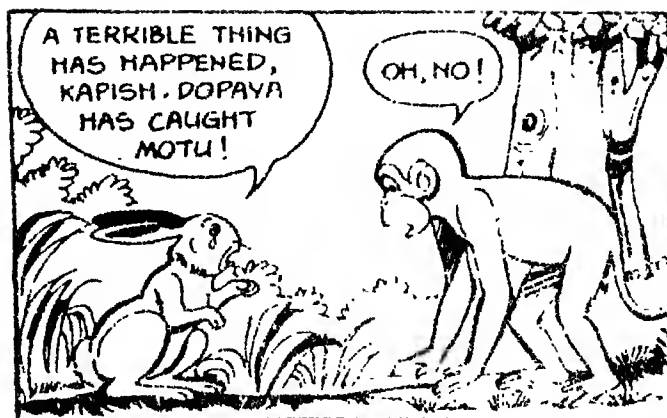
The story of the voyage has now been dramatised in a lavish musical puppet show. Called 'The Grand Adventure', the show is largely a fantasy, although it retains the historical outlines of the voyage.

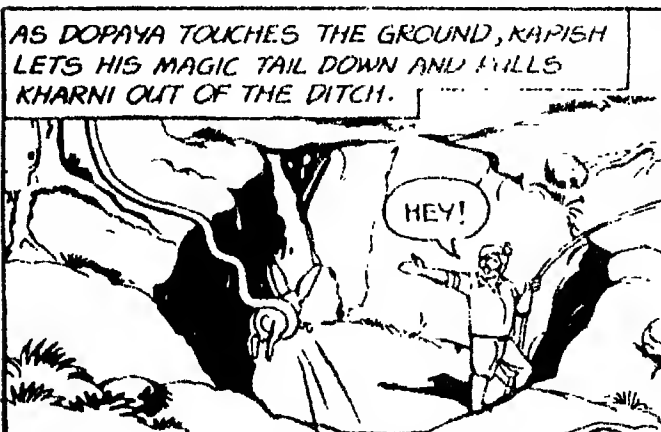
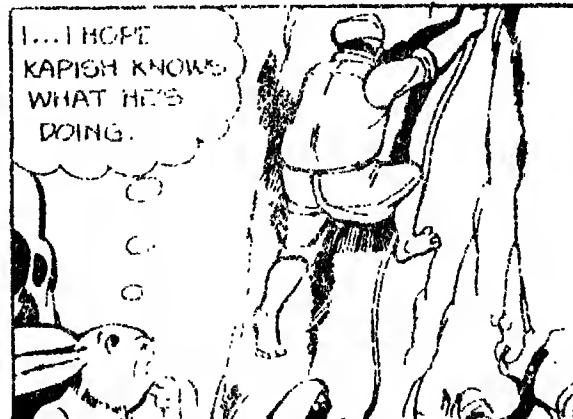
'The Grand Adventure' has a cast of 127 puppets each wearing period costumes. The show is the creation of one of Australia's best-known puppeteers, Phillip Edmiston, who formed his own company, Theatrestrings, to



Mr. Edmiston and a young member of the audience, Matthew Jones, backstage with some of the puppet characters from 'The Grand Adventure'. The puppets, from left, are Baby Keela, Captain Cook, Sir Joseph Banks, and Dolores Kengeroo.







# SLEIGHT-OF-HAND WITH COIN, CARDS

**W**HEN I met Roy the Mystic, the Grand Old Man of Magic, for the last time in 1977, he was entertaining his 10-year-old grandson with some sleight-of-hand magic, (or 'conjuring' as it is also called). He had just finished a fine trick when I arrived, and the boy begged his grandad to 'do it again, please'. I supplemented his request with mine, and Roy the Mystic did it again. It was a beautiful little trick with a coin, the effect being: passing a coin through the elbow into the closed fist. I feel I should explain the trick here for the benefit of young students of sleight-of-hand magic.

## Coin through the elbow

As I took my seat beside the boy, Roy stood sideways in front of us, with his left side towards us. With both sleeves of his panjabi rolled up above the elbows, he showed both hands empty, casually and without any remark about the hands being empty. Closing his right hand into a fist he said: "If I take a coin with the left hand and rub the coin into the right elbow forcefully enough, it will pass right through the arm into the fist, so that when I open the fist, like this, you will see the coin!"

Synchronizing his speech with an action, he struck the right elbow with his left hand, made a rubbing movement with it on the elbow, looked at the right fist, and opened it.

"You don't see any coin in my right hand, do you?" he added. "You don't. Because, the left hand was empty when it rubbed the right elbow."

He showed his left hand empty, back and front, as he uttered the word 'EMPTY'.

"But, look, there is a coin floating in the air. I catch it with my left hand," he said, grabbing the coin (invisible to us) in the air

suddenly with his left hand. He then rubbed the coin, thus caught from the air by the left hand, into the elbow of the right hand. Just after a few moments of rubbing, he opened the right hand and I, along with the magician's grandson, was surprised to find a coin in his right hand.

"You have seen the coin pass through the right elbow into the right hand," he said. "The same coin can also now be made to pass into the left fist through the left elbow. Look."

With a sudden semicircular leftward turn, so that now his right side was towards us, he rubbed the coin with his right hand into the left elbow. Next he showed his right hand empty and at once opened his left fist to show that the coin had really passed through the left arm into the left fist.

How was it done? The whole trick depended mainly on smart and well-timed throwing and catching, aided by misdirection. By pretending to catch a coin from the air, Roy the Mystic for a short while misdirected our attention away from his right hand towards his left hand, and during that short while, unobserved by us, he secured a coin in his right hand from the right side pocket of his panjabi. Pretending to have caught a coin in his left hand from the air, he closed his left fist on empty space, so that when he pretended he was rubbing the coin into his right elbow with his left hand, he was merely rubbing his empty left hand on the right elbow. We had last seen his right hand empty, and had not noticed him taking a coin from his pocket in that hand. We were, therefore, under the impression that the right fist was still empty. And so, when he opened the right fist and we saw a coin there, we concluded that he had really caught a coin from the air by the left hand and it had really passed into his right hand magically through the arm.

Now comes the most vital part of the trick. At the moment of starting the leftward semicircular sweep, Roy's arms were horizontal and parallel, with his left fist close to the right elbow. When the semicircular leftward sweep was completed, the positions of the two arms and hands were reversed: they were both horizontal and parallel, but the right hand was being rubbed on the left elbow, pretending to rub the coin into it. In course of the sweep, the right hand had thrown the coin into the left hand which had opened for a fraction of a second to receive it, so that when the right hand was apparently rubbing the coin into the left elbow, the coin was really already inside the left fist. Thanks to the simultaneous sweep of the body and the arms and hands, the throw of the coin into the left hand is not noticed by the onlookers unless the performer is unpractised and clumsy. These instructions will be much easier to follow with a coin in hand. The effect, in practised hands, is mystifying.

### Card colour-change

Roy the Mystic showed another trick to satisfy his grandson's craze for magic. This was a "colour-changing routine" (as it is called in magical parlance) with a pack of playing cards, generously supplemented by fancy flourishes with them and sudden production of card-fans from behind the arm-pit, behind the knee, etc. The effect, even in his feeble, aged hands was beautiful. Holding the pack in his left hand, the pack facing us, he very lightly caressed the face card with his right hand (it seemed as if the right hand hardly touched the card) and it changed its colour, i.e., changed into a different card, e.g. an ace of spades changed into a king of diamonds. Had this been done by the older method, a spectator could say: "I know how you did it. You just placed another card on the face of the pack. Take off the king of diamonds, and we shall see the ace of spades." And he would be quite correct. Let me explain below the older method learnt during my school days:

Stand with your right side towards the spectator, holding the pack of cards (facing

the spectator) in the left hand, the longer side of the pack horizontal (i.e. parallel to the floor). The inner half of the pack (the half nearer to your body) is held between the left thumb on top, three fingers under the bottom, and the left forefinger, its tip slightly moistened, resting on the back card behind the pack, unseen by the spectator. Cover the face of the pack with your right hand in such a way that the angle between the right thumb and the right forefinger is just above the inner top corner of the pack and about half the length of the fingers project beyond the pack. Unseen by the spectator, your left forefinger pushes the back-card beyond the pack. You move your right hand outward a little. The left forefinger pushes the back card till its top portion is pressed between the tip of the left forefinger and the right hand fingers. Move the right hand a little farther till the back card springs clear of the pack into your right hand. You bend the hand inward a little so that the card sticks to your right hand, its face next to your palm. (Holding a card like that is called 'palming'. See *Children's World*, May 1978) The spectator cannot see the card in your right palm and, if you have been able to transfer the back card neatly to your right palm, he thinks your right hand is empty. Pretending to rub the face of the pack with your right hand, you simply leave this card on the face of the pack. The spectator will think that the face card of the pack has magically changed its colour as a result of the rubbing.

Roy the Mystic had taught me his method, which was different and better. Of course, it needs long practice for neat execution and cannot be mastered in a hurry. In it, the left forefinger, resting free behind the pack, instead of pushing the top card outward beyond the pack, pushes several cards from the top inward, just as the right hand makes an ineffective rubbing movement on the face of the pack inward (i.e. towards the body). I say 'ineffective' because this first rubbing movement makes no change in the face of the pack. The right thumb goes behind the small lot of cards (say ten or twelve) pushed inward by the left forefinger, and the inner top corner of this lot is held at the crotch



of the thumb by the pressure of the pack, remains stationary, but the right hand, moving inward, comes clear away from the pack, retaining (concealed from the spectator's view) the small lot (pushed inward, off the pack, by the left forefinger) pressed between the right fingers naturally curved inward and the lower portion of the right palm. The right thumb is now free. Thus, instead of only one card stolen from the back of the pack, you now secretly have in your right palm a number of cards stolen from the back of the pack. Your right hand is now **apparently** empty. By thorough practice you must be able to palm the cards in such a manner that your hand does not betray the presence of something in the hand by its unnatural, awkward shape. You now pretend to rub the face of the pack a second time with your empty(?) right hand and, in the process, leave the whole palmed lot on the face of the pack.

In this method, you 'take a load' (in the technical language of magic) of cards in your right palm from the back of the pack. (Taking a load means getting possession of something without the knowledge of the spectators.) The spectator just sees that you cover the face of the pack momentarily with your right hand and then take your right hand away; he does not know that this apparently very innocent process has helped

you to steal away a number of cards from the back of the pack.

Now, the secret load you have thus obtained you can utilize either in changing the colour of the face card or in producing card-fans, say, from behind your arm-pit. To do the latter, you simply take your apparently empty (but secretly loaded with enough cards to make an impressive card-fan) right hand behind your left arm-pit for a moment, spread the cards into a fan by a rubbing movement of the thumb and the fingers in opposite directions, and bring the hand forward with the card-fan in effective display.

After the magic session with his grandson, the old magician devoted his undivided attention to me.

When I bade farewell to the great maestro, I did not know that it was my final adieu to him.

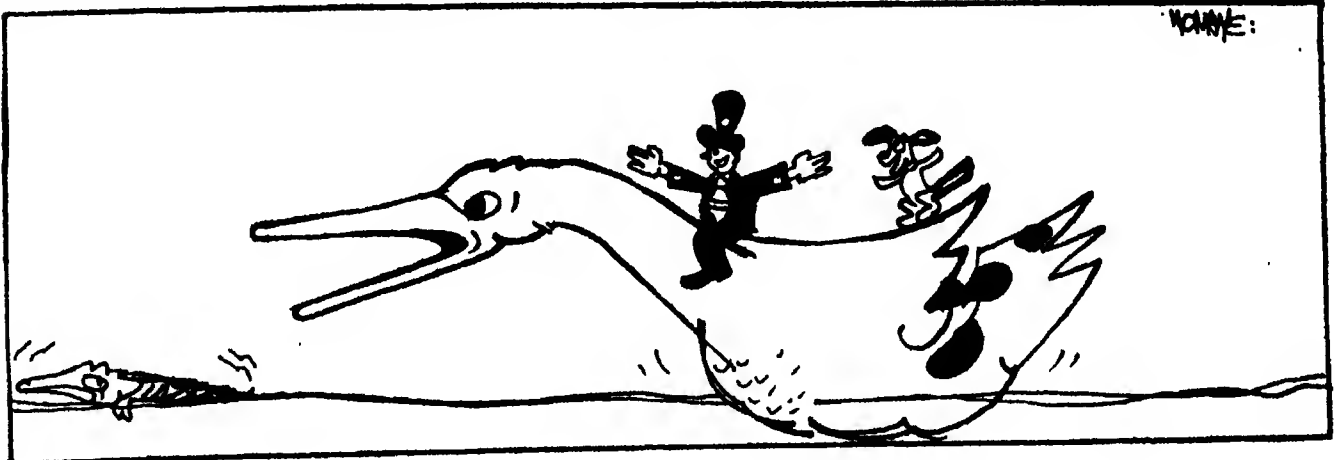
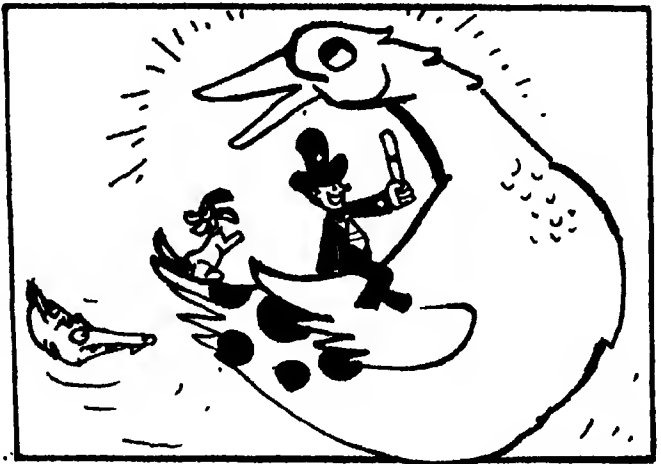
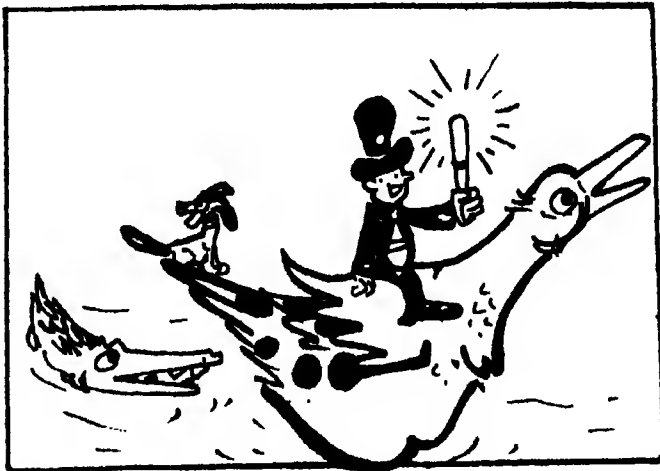
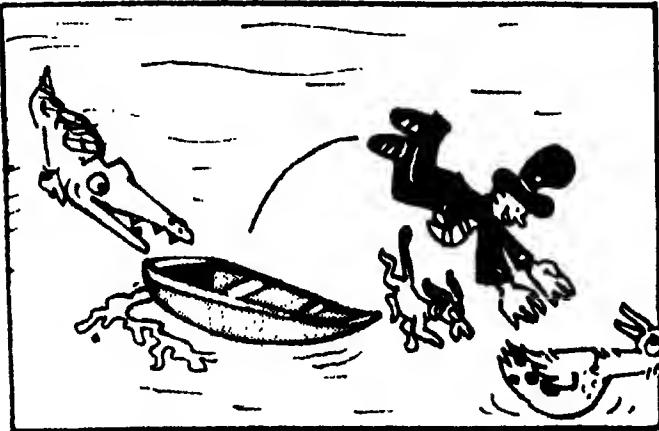
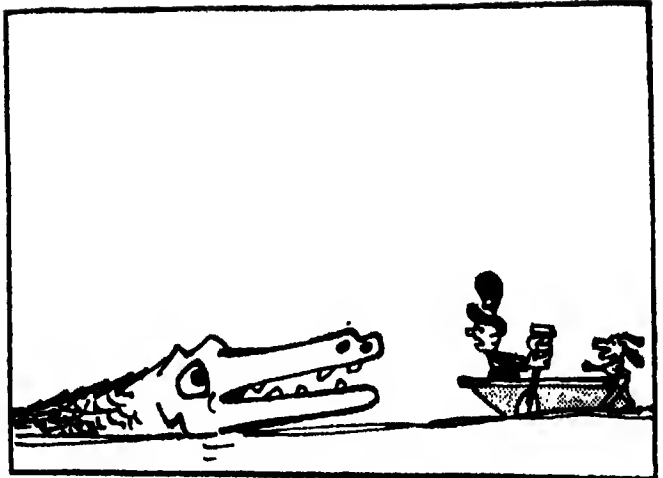
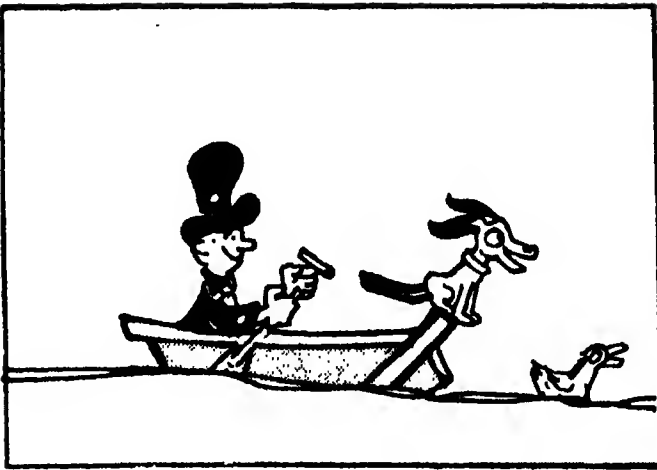
*Ajit Krishna Basu*

(Correction: November 1978 issue—Page 31—Para 2. Please read as: When he holds the glass by the rim, the coin lies hidden in the palm and cannot be seen by the spectators. The magician then strikes at the bottom of the glass with his left hand and at the same moment releases the coin from the right palm so that it drops down into the glass.)



*(Turn over)*





# BOOK REVIEW

**Thama and the Strange Beast**  
by Kamala Laxman  
India Book House, Bombay  
Rs. 4.50

'Thama and the Strange Beast' is an animal story, but Kamala Laxman has portrayed her characters so well that they behave like human beings. In fact, when I first read the book, I was reminded of my five-year-old nephew, who always has dozens of questions to ask, just like our little inquisitive hero, Thama.

"Is it not nice in the water? Then, why aren't you there? Did you get wet in the water? Then, why did you stay so long in the pond if it is so wet?" These are some of the umpteen questions children put to adults, and this deep insight into a child's mind is highly commendable here.

But, two things particularly dear to children are bright, colourful pictures and an action-packed script. The main attraction of a children's book, they say, lies in its illustrations rather than the story. And I am

afraid Kamala Laxman's book is lacking in both.

The illustrations by R.K. Laxman are good, but I doubt whether they will appeal to children. For one, they lack in colour and are dull and lifeless.

The story, though delightfully told, loses its appeal owing to the numerous grammatical mistakes. In certain places, the sentence construction is bad and incorrect phrases like "will not allow me to rest", "splashing water in a wide circle", and "crookedest horns" have been ignored.

Otherwise, the author's style is simple and easy to understand. It would be suitable for children in the age group 8-10.

N.A.

**Friendly Tales**  
by Jeanie Mody  
India Book House, Bombay  
Rs. 4.50

These are four delightful stories that express a fascinating blend of friendship between beasts, birds, and man. Attractively

and appropriately illustrated, they unfold a sense of adventure and suspense, which makes them all the more readable and entertaining for the young.

The author's love for children is revealed by the careful selection of plots in the stories, and by the fact that no 'adult' message or moral is thrust upon the reader. Each story bubbles with excitement.

The language is mostly simple, though in some of the stories, like 'The Friends', words such as 'straddled' and 'mottled' could easily have been avoided.

The illustrations in 'Humpy and Leo' are expressive and make the story come alive.

The author has portrayed some touching scenes that immediately arrest the reader's attention. However, there are certain editorial errors that should not have been overlooked, especially in a book meant for children. For instance, on page 14 the phrase, 'gave a gentle roar' is grammatically incorrect, as is 'danced with excitement' in 'The Gift' (last page). On page 4, the reference is to 'a sharp pointed horn' whereas the picture below shows a rhino with two horns!

These apart, the book which has an attractive cover is 'good fun'.

N.S.

# THE SCRAGGLY TREE

*(This is the story of a scraggly tree which I hope, will blossom this year.)*

ONCE upon a time, there was a scraggly tree. It was only two feet high, and it had only two or three scraggly leaves which weren't even particularly green.

On the day God created the Earth, He made the scraggly tree and planted it in the middle of a tiny island in the middle of the ocean. "There you are, little scraggly tree," he said, "now you must wait."

So the little scraggly tree waited for many, many years.

And one day, a man named Christopher Columbus came sailing along the ocean waves and stopped at the little island.

"A-ha!" he cried, greatly excited. "I've discovered India at last!"

"Oh," said the little scraggly tree, greatly astonished, "this isn't India, this is just Earth!"

"What?" exclaimed Christopher Columbus, greatly dismayed. "Oh dear, oh dear, this is terrible—suppose we fall off the edge? but I must sail on. Good-bye, little tree."

"Good-bye," said the little scraggly tree, resuming its long wait.

Three or four hundred years passed. Then,

one day, there was a great boom and a horrible grey monster rose out of the sea.

"Good gracious," said the little scraggly tree, even more astonished. "What in the world are you?"

"Halt!" cried a terrible voice from inside the monster. "Halt or I shoot!"

"Oh dear," sighed the little tree. "What a fuss you make. I can't even move."

"Come again?" said the voice in the monster suspiciously. "Which side are you on?"

"I'm in the middle," said the scraggly tree innocently, looking around itself. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh," said the voice in the monster, greatly relieved. "You mean, you're neutral. Well, in that case, good-bye. You're very lucky."

And with that, the horrible grey monster disappeared slowly into the ocean.

'How extraordinary,' remarked the little tree to itself. 'If you wait long enough, you see a lot of very funny things.'

And it straightened out its few scraggly leaves and patiently watched the ocean go by.

A few years later there was a great deal of noise and an enormous ship rolled into sight. It stopped at the little island and a

magnificent man in a magnificent mink coat stepped forward.

"On behalf of His Royal Highness King Maharaja Monarch Emperor III, I hereby proclaim," he read aloud, "that this island, on the 29th of February, 1952 anno domini, becomes the property of . . ."

"Really," interrupted the little scraggly tree indignantly. "This is ridiculous. How can you take over this island without asking me first?"

"B . . . b . . . but . . ." protested the magnificent man in the magnificent mink coat. Then he cleared his throat and said "Hm . . . ahem . . . cr . . . yes? indeed? I beg your pardon. Let us leave." With a great deal of noise, they departed.

And the scraggly tree was left alone once again, to wait in peace.

Until one starry, starry night, when a long raft came sailing by, with a hundred children standing on it. The smallest one stood in front holding a white candle, and togeth-

er they were softly singing hymns.

"Oh, how beautifully you sing!" sighed the little scraggly tree. "I wish I could sing like you."

"We'll teach you, little tree!" cried all the children. "Each time a hymn is taught to a new person, it becomes more beautiful."

And they all gathered around the little scraggly tree, and by the light of their one white candle, sang many lovely hymns. And the little tree knew at last that this was what it had been waiting for all its life, ever since the world began.

And it was so happy that as it sang, it cried tears of joy which fell on its scraggly roots and made them grow. And then its leaves sprang to life and its branches grew and spread their arms to the East, where the sun had just begun to rise—on a New Year—the Year of the Child.

And the little scraggly tree had grown up, and did not have to wait anymore.

*Minnie P. Swami*

## TRUST

I give this heart  
Into your hands,  
And I know,  
And I hope  
You shall forever  
Keep the secrets  
That it has told.  
For I know,  
You shall understand  
All that it  
Has ever revealed.  
All my joys and sorrows,  
And dreams and shames,  
And all the hopes  
Of today and tomorrow.

*Sharmishta Roychowdhury (11)*  
*India*

## DAYS GONE BY

I give my heart  
Into your hands,  
To caress and nurse,  
And above all understand.  
As I gazed up, into the sky,  
My heart leaped, I stifled a cry.  
My thoughts raced to days gone by,  
Those childhood years so soon did fly!  
I relived a moment of that pure life  
so free,  
When little I knew how today would be,  
How of myself I'd think one day,  
Amazed how life doth change its way;  
So gradually, like a mountain built  
From centuries of river-deposited silt,  
The moment vanished, I gaze in vain  
At the Heavens to capture again  
That sweet memory of days gone by,  
Those childhood years so soon did fly!

*Anjali Krishna (15)*  
*India*

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davp 78/361

## Christmas Stamps From Canada

**T**HREE early Renaissance paintings from the collection of the National Gallery of Canada were chosen to illustrate the three stamps in the 1978 Christmas series. Only the focal point of the paintings, mother and infant, appears on the stamps.

The illustration on the 12-cent stamp was taken from an early 15th century painting, *The Madonna of the Flowering Pea*, by an anonymous master of the Cologne School. The 14-cent stamp is based on the late 15th century painting, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anthony and Donor*, by Hans Memling of the Flemish School. The illustration for the 30-cent stamp was taken from the centre portion of a 14th century triptych, *The Virgin and Child with Saints, the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Crucifixion*, by Jacopo Di Cione.

The Madonna and Child has been a favourite subject of painters down the centuries. No other subject captures so well the spirit of reverence and joy people experience anew each year as they celebrate the birth of the infant Jesus.

If Saint Luke had not written his unique account of the birth and first years of Jesus from the Virgin Mary's side of the story, she would have remained almost unknown. However, because of his presumed direct access to the mother of Jesus, the Gospel of this holy historian/painter became the source of inspiration for generations of artists seeking to represent one of the most prevailing and poignant images of Christianity—the Madonna and Child.

*(Courtesy : Canadian Information Department)*



# STAMPS GIVE "GREAT FUN"

**W**E are all lovers of stamps. We love them for their colours and we love them for the lovely pictures they have. It is "great fun" when the postman arrives and with much fuss, he hands us an envelope from Australia. We scramble to fight for the stamps. "Heads I win, tail you lose". That is how we have to fight and fight! And now we have so many stamps that we do not know what to do! And we also know so much on stamp collecting as we have taken our lessons at the "We Philatelists" club in Delhi, that we feel as proud as professional philatelists. But we are still "stamp-collectors" and we think, it will yet take us some time before we become "philatelists". But right now, we are all restless because the Delhi Youth Stamp show at the Modern School, Barakhamba Road, is very close and we will be displaying our stamps there.

Here WE introduce OURSELVES...



Sachin Jain

I am Sachin Jain and for your information, only ten years old. I study in class V. I am very fond of animals. But I was sad when my pet dog ran away. I did not keep another but I decided instead to collect



Thomas Kuriakose

stamps, because they cannot "run away". Like I could pet my dog, I can open my album and "speak" to my stamps and even hear their "answers". As you have probably guessed, I collect stamps on animals. What else do I like? Oh, those beautiful artistic vases and jars which are sold in the bazar and which I want to buy "all at one time". But I do not always like the things my parents bring for me. So, when my school offered us to teach crafts, I immediately gave in my name. And now, if you see my studio at home, it is like a real "workshop". There are ships, and aeroplanes. I also like painting. My mother is a friend to me. She listens to what I want to do and helps me do it. One day, I was singing in the bathroom. My parents had friends visiting them. They heard my song and asked my mother if the radio was on. So, now I have taken to music seriously and am taking tuition in music. I am also in the school choir and feel happiest when my parents and teachers "thump" me on the back...bravo."

Now, meet Manish Mehta. He is eleven years old and is fascinated by the way birds fly. He has collected stamps on birds. He thinks that birds are the "most beautiful creatures" on earth. "I admire the dignity with which birds soar into the air. I admire the swiftness with which they fly in the sky." Manish had taken part in the 'DAKIANA-78' Stamp show and won a Silver Bronze medal and is proud of it. Another of his hobby is coin-collecting, but stamp-collecting comes "first" because, he says, "I come to know about other countries of the world.





**Shravan Vashisht**

I also pass my time well and do not get bored.

Here's Shravan Vashisht. He is older than Sachin and Manish. He is 14 and is studying in class 8 at St. Columbas High School. Listen to him: "I began stamp-collecting five years back. My cousin presented me his stamp collection and for three years I collected stamps from all over the world. In 1976, I became a member of "We Philatelists". After that, I became serious. I read books on stamp-collecting and on the advice of other members, I chose a "topic". This was musical instruments, composers, and music scores. You see, I myself am learning the violin and am fond of the Raag Durga, Tilang, Hansdwani and Chandrakans. Amongst the western composers I like Debussy, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and Schumann. Now, back to stamps! I attended all meetings regularly and visited stamp exhibitions. My mother took me all the way to Bangalore to see the INDIPEX-77 and ASIANA-77 in October 1977. I really learnt some good techniques about lay-outs of stamps. In the meanwhile, I have been collecting stamps by exchanging them with friends, buying them, and getting them as gifts from relatives.

"When I had a fair collection, I decided, it was time I exhibited them. So, I took part in a regional exhibition called DAKIANA-78, in New Delhi, in June. The work of classification and write-up on each stamp was painstaking, but I am proud I was awarded a Bronze medal for my display. I hope I win a prize in the December show, too.

"I have my "likes" about stamps. I prefer black and white to coloured ones. I like the writing on the stamps but I do not care for big stamps. My penpals are in St. Kitt's and Korea. I send my Korean friend stamps from my "world" collection and he sends me stamps on musical instruments. My school pals also exchange stamps with me.

"Will it frighten you if I tell you I am learning Karate for the last seven months? I will get my yellow belt in January 1979. I will really be able to "defend" myself."

Thomas Kuriakose is fourteen-and-a-half years-old and studies in class 9 at St. Xavier's school. "From a young age, I have been fascinated by stamps. I loved everything about them. The land, the people, and the flora and the fauna they showed. I particularly liked the stamps of the British colonies because they made beautiful stamps. My father had many friends abroad and we received a lot of cards and letters. I would remove the stamps and store them in an envelope. Then, my father took me to see the INDIPEX-73. I was given a free packet of stamps at the entrance. I was really thrilled. On opening the packet, I found some old stamps. There was a stamp of Cochin and from then on I became attracted towards Cochin stamps.

"I studied everything I could on Cochin



**Shalini Gupta**

stamps. I propose to present a 32-page exhibit at the Delhi Youth Stamp Show on Cochin stamps only. In DAKIANA-78, I won a "special prize" for my 16-page exhibit. I belong to Kerala and my hometown is in

Cochin. I have some stationery and stamps from there. My next exhibit will be "The Call for Peace." This subject interests me very much."

And now Govind Menon:

"I study in class 9 at the Delhi Public School. When I was a child, my mother told me stamp-collecting is a good hobby and with her guidance, I started removing stamps from covers and putting them in a box. My grandfather helped me by passing on all the stamps and covers he received as gifts. When my mother took me to see



Govind Menon (2nd from left)

INDIPEX-73, I persuaded her to buy me a packet of stamps. Two years back, my father gave me an album which contained stamps from all over the world. This album my Dad had prepared with the help of his parents. When I had collected a hoard of old, new, mint, used, good, and damaged stamps, I asked my grandfather to advise me in arranging and sorting them. He got me interested in his own branch of philately, dealing with Army Post Offices.

"I did a lot of study on the Indian Army post offices. I begged, borrowed and bought additional material. I displayed a 32-page exhibit at DAKIANA-78. My exhibit showed special stamps, covers and stationery used by our armed forces both in India and abroad. I had included such overprinted stamps as CEF (1900) TEF (1914)

and ICC (1968). My oldest item is an unused soldier's envelope dated 1879 and my newest is the latest special cover issued by the Army Postal Service in 1978. At the DAKIANA-78, I won a silver Medal. For the Delhi Youth Stamp Show, I have chosen the theme "Domestication of animals". If I am successful in this, I plan to tackle the subject of "Wild Life Preservation", as I am a member of the Wild Life Fund-India, and deeply interested in this subject.

Shalini Gupta, who is just ten years old, studies in standard V at the Springdales School. She has a collection of stamps which show the "Cat" family. There are lions, tigers, leopards, hyenas, cheetahs, caracals, and also the mongoose. Shalini participated in DAKIANA-78 and won a Special Prize for her theme "The Cat—my pet—and its family." She says: "I showed these animals with complete details of their physical features, their habitat, food habits, also their harmful effects on man, and their use to man. I added proverbs, sayings, quotations related to these animals. Of course, all this was in addition to the philatelic information about the stamps. I gave an 'Introduction' about how I started collecting stamps. My other hobbies are reading fairy tales."

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# How the Frog Began to Croak

**T**HIS happened very, very long ago. At that time there weren't any human beings on the Earth. Only wild animals like the elephant, tiger, rhino, cheetah, bear who roamed the jungles and other small animals such as foxes, wolves, and frogs—who could not croak.

It hadn't rained for a very long time and most of the streams were dry. Even the rivers ran low. The animals were very worried. Every morning they looked up at the sky, hoping to see the clouds rolling in—but there was nothing except the blazing sun.

The Frog couldn't bear it any longer; so he decided to go to the King of the Gods and beg Him to send rain to the Earth. He spoke of his plans to his friend, the Fox, who told it to his friend, the Bear, who told it to his friend, the Cheetah.

The Frog could not, obviously, cover the distance quickly, so all the friends decided to go to the King of Gods. By now the news had spread like forest fire among the rest of the animals, and they gave them a warm send-off. They cheered the brave adventurers so loudly that the Gods above—who were too busy to bother about the Earth just then—were disturbed and wondered what was happening down there.

Day after day, the small company trudged on and on. The Frog was persuaded to sit on the back of one of his friends, as he could not move fast. Sometimes he would sit on the Cheetah's back, sometimes the Fox's and other times the Bear's.

At last, one afternoon, they neared the City of the Gods where they came upon a gurgling stream. The four friends had their fill of water, washed and cleaned themselves and rested for a while.

They reached the City gates but saw that they were shut. There was a huge drum by the side of the gates, but there was nothing to beat it with. So, they asked the Frog to jump on the drum.

The drum made a loud boom, but nobody came. The Frog took in a deep breath and jumped again—harder. This time the drum made such a loud boom that the Frog nearly

jumped out of his skin. He jumped higher in the air and, of course, landed more heavily, making the drum sound louder each time. But as it was the God's drum, it did not burst.

As for his friends, the Fox hid behind the Bear, who cowered behind the Cheetah, who trembled behind a rock, and every one of them covered their ears.

Poor Frog! He did not know what to do, but kept on jumping, and naturally the drum kept on sounding. He jumped again and again and saw that if he turned a bit towards the right, he'd be nearing the edge of the drum in three jumps and could jump right off it in the fourth.

BOOM . . . BOOM . . . BOOM . . . and then, aah! Wonderful silence!

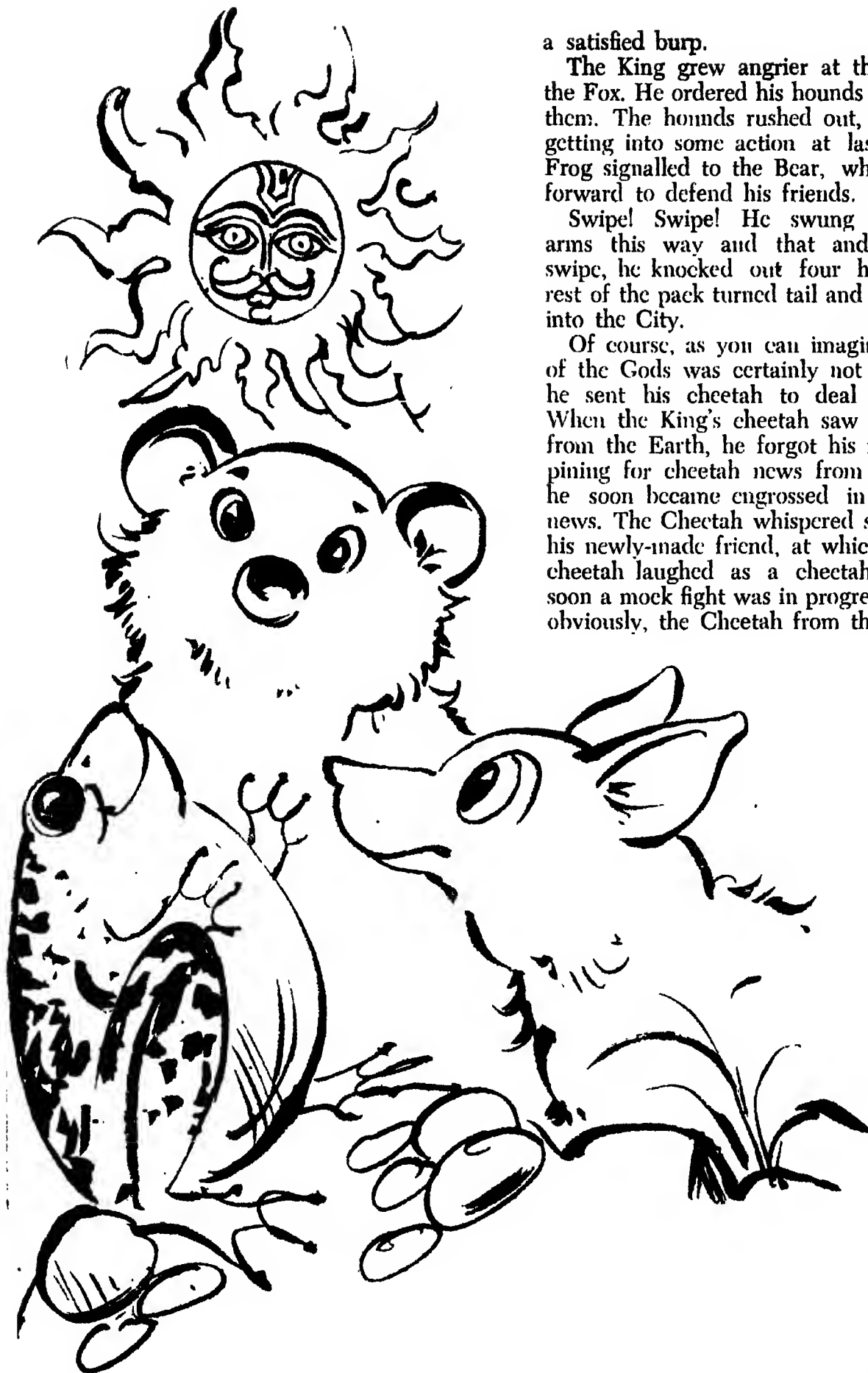
When the drum stopped beating, the Cheetah looked cautiously from behind the rock, and seeing the Frog panting on the ground, came out from his hiding place with the Bear and the Fox.

At this time of the day, the King of the Gods enjoyed his afternoon nap—and had ordered that nobody should disturb him. The Gods thought that the best way of not disturbing him was to enjoy a nap themselves. So, during the afternoons, the City of Gods slept soundly.

The loud booms woke everyone and, of course, the King was the angriest of all. Who dare disturb him at this ungodly hour? He sent his bodyguard to investigate. The drowsy guard opened the gates and looked out. He grimaced when he saw the Frog blinking at him. The Cheetah, Bear, and the Fox sat some way off, patiently.

'It's only a Frog,' he said to himself. 'An ugly thing. Ugh! Look at its pimply skin, and its bulging eyes! Goodness, even his legs are crooked. And he dares to disturb the King of the Gods!' He shut the gates and reported to the King.

The King was too angry to understand the reason for the disturbance. He sent his pet duck to deal with the Frog. The Frog saw the duck and signalled to the Fox, who made short work of it and stood back with



a satisfied burp.

The King grew angrier at the Frog and the Fox. He ordered his hounds to deal with them. The hounds rushed out, eager to be getting into some action at last. But the Frog signalled to the Bear, who lumbered forward to defend his friends.

Swipe! Swipe! He swung his mighty arms this way and that and with each swipe, he knocked out four hounds! The rest of the pack turned tail and rushed back into the City.

Of course, as you can imagine, the King of the Gods was certainly not pleased. So, he sent his cheetah to deal with them. When the King's cheetah saw the Cheetah from the Earth, he forgot his mission, and pining for cheetah news from the jungles, he soon became engrossed in exchanging news. The Cheetah whispered something to his newly-made friend, at which the King's cheetah laughed as a cheetah laughs and soon a mock fight was in progress, of which, obviously, the Cheetah from the Earth was

the victor, He grinned at the Frog and signalled him to sound the drum again.

When the King heard the drum booming, he gave in and agreed to grant the 'rascals', as he called them, an audience.

Soon the four were before the King and humbly made their request to send rain down to the Earth.

The King, quite wide awake now, was impressed by their courage and determination to bring their prayer to him in person, all the way from the Earth. He at once instructed his Minister for Rain and Snow to empty the Earth's quota of rain immediately, and on time in the future.

The King rewarded everyone of them handsomely and as the Frog was their leader—and could not croak—he granted him a boon. "In future, you will not have to come to me to ask for the rain. You just have to croak and I'll send down the rain."

The Frog, the Fox, the Bear and the Cheetah were very happy, having successfully accomplished their mission, and turned back home in high spirits.

That is how the Frog got its croak. When you hear it croaking, you can be sure the rains are not far off.

*Umesh Gaikwad*

## LAUGH WITH US!

Ajay: What day were you born?

Anil: Friday, and you?

Ajit: Sunday.

Anil: Lies! Sunday is a holiday.

*Sujata Pahwa(12)*



Once there were three persons called Somebody, Nobody, and Mad. One day,

Somebody and Nobody started to fight. Mad telephoned the police: "Somebody is fighting with Nobody."

The policeman asked: "Are you mad?"

The reply, as you have correctly guessed, was: "Yes, I am Mad."

*Aanal Bhagwati (8)*



# THE THREE WISE SAYINGS

**H**UNDREDS of years ago, the Roman Empire was ruled by a wise king called Prince Domitian. He was known far and wide as a good ruler who wielded authority justly and well.

Prince Domitian strictly punished all those who flouted the laws of the land. Even the petty thief was brought to book severely. Once punished, he never dared to resort to crime again. These stringent laws irked a few unscrupulous nobles, who found the emperor a nuisance and a hindrance to their evil activities.

One day, the emperor was in his court, when a merchant knocked at the gates of the palace and begged to be let in. The gatekeeper led him to the royal court. "I come from a distant land with my wares. Only you, my lord, can buy them," he said bowing low to the emperor.

His curiosity aroused, Domitian asked him, "What is it that an ordinary merchant like you can sell the ruler of the mighty Roman Empire? What merchandise have you that only I can buy?"

"They are three wise sayings, O great emperor, three excellent maxims that will stand you in good stead in the troubled days ahead. No harm shall befall you, if you follow them."

The emperor was taken aback by the merchant's reference to trouble in his empire. As far as he knew, his subjects were happy with his rule. Still, he wished to find out. "I wish to buy your three sayings. How much do you want for them?"

"A thousand florins, my lord," said the merchant.

"That's a lot of money to ask for just three sayings. However, let's make a deal. If they don't serve me any purpose, you shall return the money."

The merchant readily agreed. "The first saying is, 'Whatever you do, do wisely, think of the consequences'. The second one is, 'Never leave the highway for a by-way'. Thirdly, 'Beware of the man and his young wife; never stay overnight with them'. My lord, if you obey them, you shall never regret having paid a thousand florins

for them."

Satisfied, Prince Domitian ordered the merchant to be paid immediately. He was immensely pleased with the sayings. The first maxim, in particular, appealed to him so much that he had it engraved on the walls of his court and palace and on the trees in his garden. What is more, even his personal clothes bore the inscription—woven in threads of gold.

Meanwhile, the nobles who were displeased with the emperor plotted for his removal from the scene. They got hold of the court barber whom they bribed with money and promises of bounteous rewards once the mission was accomplished—to kill the emperor while he shaved him. Lured by the prospect of the wealth that awaited him, the



barber mustered the courage to commit the treacherous deed. While lathering the emperor's beard one morning, he was about to plunge his sharpened knife into the royal neck when the inscription on the emperor's gown arrested his eyes: 'Whatever you do, do wisely, think of the consequences'.

It set the barber thinking. 'What will be my fate tomorrow if I kill the emperor today? All the blame would surely rest on me. The cunning nobles will put me to death, as if they knew nothing.' The barber's knees trembled at the very thought. He lost the will to execute his plan; the razor fell to the ground from his trembling hands with a shrill clatter.

The emperor enquired the cause of the commotion. The barber poured out his story and pleaded, "My lord, please forgive me, have mercy on me."

"Well, the first maxim has definitely come in handy," said the emperor. "I shall let you go free now, but beware, you shall rue the day you become disloyal to me again."

When the nobles knew that their plans had gone awry, they hatched a fresh conspiracy. They were aware of the emperor's impending visit to a neighbouring city. The nobles hired killers to wait in the scrub wood on the edges of the lonely bypath to ambush the royal carriage and kill the emperor and his men.

On the appointed day, the king set out in his horse-drawn carriage, accompanied by his retinue of knights in full armour and the nobles in their resplendent attire. They rode on along the highway till they came to the bypath. Suddenly, the emperor remembered the second maxim. 'Never forsake the highway for the byway'. Prudently, he decided to adhere to the advice.

One of the nobles protested. "It's a long, circuitous route by the highway. You have always taken the bypath before."

"I shall keep to the highway; you take the byway, if you so wish," said the emperor.

Prince Domitian and his entourage reached the destination safe, while most of the nobles who took the bypath were killed or wounded by the mercenaries who thought that the emperor was with them. On hearing this, the king gratefully remem-

bered the merchant. "The second maxim has also saved my life," he remarked.

A countrywide search was now on for the conspirators; but they did not give up. The emperor was one day on his rounds of inspection in a far-flung corner of his empire. He was to halt for the night at a tiny village which had only one decent house fit enough for the emperor. It was owned by an old man, who had been bribed by the plotters to kill the emperor and his men while they slept at night.

On his arrival there, Prince Domitian asked for his host. When the old man shuffled in, he asked, "where is your wife? Bring her here."

The man hastened to call his wife, though he was quite startled by the emperor's unexpected question.

She was a very young woman. 'Beware of the old man and his young wife', the third maxim echoed in the king's ears. He pretended to retire for the night. Once in his room, he called his chamberlain. "Away from this place! Make haste, but let not our host know of it."

"But, my lord," protested the harried chamberlain, "everything has been arranged here. Besides, where can we go in this village at this late hour?"

"I'll find myself some place," said the emperor irritably. "Remain here, if you like. Join me in the morning." The emperor then mounted his horse and rode off, leaving the chamberlain worried and puzzled about the king's eccentric behaviour.

At dead of night, the old man and his young wife, unaware of the emperor's sudden departure, put to death all the king's men, including the chamberlain.

In the morning, however, Prince Domitian came back to the house in search of his men, only to find them all lying in a pool of blood. 'The third maxim has also been beneficial to me,' said the emperor to himself.

Back in his capital, he ordered a thorough search for the culprits. The old man, his wife, and all the nobles who had plotted to overthrow him were caught and sentenced to death.

To his dying day, the emperor cherished the three wise sayings that had saved his life.  
(An ancient Italian tale retold by Lakshmi Mohan)



# A TRIP TO THE WONDERLAND OF DREAMS

**T**HE moon clad in her silver garments was smiling down at me from my bedside window. On my lap lay the story-book of wonderland I was reading with interest. On the page in front of me, there was an illustration of a train. It was half-past nine. I was feeling sleepy. And before I knew, I was fast asleep. Suddenly, I felt myself jumping. Lo! and behold, I was standing beside the train. It looked quite big and real.

A cheerful voice beckoned me. "Hurry up, mister, we're just leaving. Come along. Please be quick." The voice was of a bright chap with golden hair, who I imagined was the engine driver. He was leaning out of the engine. I ran and hopped beside him.

"But, where are we going to?" I asked him.

"To Dreamland, sir," was the answer. The driver pulled a handle and the train moved on at a terrific speed. I got a glimpse of the beautiful countryside, the hills, rivers, and stations flying past. The engine whistled and we drew alongside a platform. It was Dreamland station. I got down from the train.

All of a sudden I heard someone call my name. I turned towards the direction of the voice. And what do you think I saw? Richie Rich, Gloria, Lotta, Dot, Wendy, Casper, a whole bunch of my favourite cartoon characters were marching towards me. I walked out of the station with them.

There was a car waiting outside for us. Cadbury, the butler of Richie Estate, was standing beside the vehicle. He raised his hat and bowed to me. I was surprised. I was meeting them for the first time in person, yet I had a strong feeling that I knew them for a long time. I stepped inside and the car started. Richie himself was at the wheel. The car moved along the streets of Dreamland.

I gaped in surprise. The streets and houses of Dreamland were made of sparkling colourful gems. In the car, Wendy, the good witch, promised me a ride on her broom. My joy knew no bounds. The car went through a gate. Richie told me that we were now at the Richie Estate. The car went nearly half-a-mile and then drew alongside a beautiful mansion of red and white gems.

Everyone got down from the car. Mr. Rich and Mrs. Rich were waiting for us at the door. Richie introduced me to them. Then I went inside with them. The walls had been painted with Dollar notes. Richie led me to my room.

It was a fantastically arranged room, filled with all sorts of modern gadgets. There was an adjoining bath in which I washed myself neat and clean. Later, Richie came to call me for breakfast. After breakfast, I went out with Richie. At first, we went to the Richie Estate Scientific laboratories and then to the Richie Rich movie studio. A shooting was in progress when we went there. From there we went to the Richie Estate zoo. Later, in his own private room, a computer arranged a full day programme for us.

At first I went with him to the garden. Gloria and Wendy were waiting for us. As promised by Wendy, she let me ride on her broom. It rose high up in the sky. The view of Dreamland was wonderful. The houses looked like toys. But I was afraid of falling down, so I stuck to the broom. When I got down, I felt dizzy.

I rested on the grass, while Casper, the friendly ghost, gave me a free show of his tricks. I enjoyed them very much. Lotta and Dot had also come by then. Lotta picked me up as if I was a feather, and in that position she wandered round the garden with me for nearly ten minutes. I was frightened of Lotta at first, because she was huge, but

I soon got friendly with her. Dot showed me her collection of dotted toys.

After a playful morning in the garden, we had lunch at Richie's mansion. After lunch, I went with Richie to an auditorium in the town, where Mandrake the famous magician was performing with his assistant Lothar. Superman and Phantom had also come to watch the show. I met all of them. It was so wonderful to meet all those superstars. I felt I was in . . . psst.

When we were returning in Richie's car, a boy in bellbottoms and shirt waved out to me. It was Archie. Behind him were Jughead, Reggie, and others. They all waved to me. I waved back to them. We returned to Richie's mansion at 6 o'clock.

After tea, Richie presented me with a watch which worked automatically and did not need any spring. Casper gave me a magic wand. Wendy presented me with a box full of spells. Dot gave me some dotted shirt-pieces and bellbottoms. And Lotta gave me a huge cake, as big as herself. Cadbury pack-

ed up the presents for me. I was feeling very happy and thanked them all for their lovely gifts. I carried the parcels in my hand. Richie drove me to the station in his car.

We went inside to the ticket-counter. The man at the window asked me where I wanted to go. I was shocked. From where had I come? I didn't know, and suddenly I began to tremble. In fear I ran towards the guard when, suddenly, I bumped against a pillar—and woke up with a start.

I was sitting on my bed. The sun was streaming inside from the window. I looked for my presents, but they were not there. I opened the story-book which was still lying on my lap, and looked at the illustration of the train. I am sure that I saw smoke rising from the engine for a moment.

May be some of you will also visit the wonderland of dreams—Dreamland—one day!

*Subhendu Mukherjee (14)*  
*India*

## MY FAMILY

**M**Y home is not a certain place and my family not certain beings. I roam from hill to dale, admiring the creations of my Lord.

I sleep in the fields under the vast starry sky. The rabbits, fowls, squirrels, and others are my family. I share my bread with them. A strange family, don't you think so? And stranger still, they change with each sunset. By now you must have guessed who I am. A vagabond! All His humble creations are my family. His cathedrals my home. I sleep with my family all around, but I dine sometimes alone.

Though the sneaky rabbit is afraid of me at times, yet he is in my family. The squirrels will eat the bread I throw, but they won't

give me a single nut. Selfish, aren't they? But I don't mind it, because God has made them animals, and so I don't expect humane manners from them.

The birds consider me no bit a negligible object. Though I may fix my eyes on them for a long time, yet they rarely bother to have a peep at me. But I have no grudge against them. For, who expects innocent beings to gaze at a sinner like me?

So that's my family. Each engrossed in his own affairs, each the least mindful of the other, but none encroaching upon the other's rights.

*Khwaja Shams Abdul Rehman*  
*India*

# MAROONED OFF A METEOROID

## THE STORY SO FAR

*The scene: Epsilon Eridani, a star system billions and billions of kilometres away from the sun. The wreckage of a spacecraft lies among a debris of rocks. A distress signal brings to it rescuers from another star system.*

*Cautiously, but enthusiastically because they have sensed the presence of life, the explorers reach the wreckage through virgin darkness. The metallic glow of the spacecraft guides them to the door hatch which lies open.*

*Contrary to their expectations, the rescue of the living being inside poses no problem. They find him dying, but succeed in reviving him with an energy dose. "Emergency! Armstrong IV calling! It's an emergency!" he cries out as if from a tape-recorder.*

*When pacified, the voice heaves a sigh of relief. "I knew aeons ago you'd come. Thank you, my rescuers!"*

*"How did you reach this star system? When did you come?" The rescuers cannot wait for an answer.*

*The being then narrates his story: "We were floating in space... collision... Armstrong IV of the Lunar Base Archimedes... on a mission called Jules Verne... a record with me will shed more light on the mission... my captain had given it*

*to me before he died..."*

*A click, and they heard a different voice: "The space around me is full of stars, yet I seem to be fated to die in this Eagle which I am riding. My computer colleagues assure me help is at hand. They have been trying to contact Space Station-X, the nearest to us, which seems to me the only hope. Meanwhile let me keep a record of my disastrous mission.*

*"It was April 10, 1972. People in Montana in the USA saw a black spot hanging in the sky. Soon they guessed that it could only be a meteoroid. They feared it might fall on them and stamp out all life. However, instead of anything like that, the meteoroid was miraculously seen bolting away from them!"*

*"People soon forgot the meteoroid, but not the astronomers. They wanted a spacecraft to land on it with instruments. Project Verne, called after the great science fiction writer, was got ready and, unfortunately for me, I volunteered to serve on this secret mission. The thought that I might one day return like a hero was tempting me.*

*"While we waited for another meteoroid in the second half of the twenty-first century, it appeared on the scene much too soon."*

*Now read on...*

## 3. HISTORIC LANDING

**A** GUEST meteoroid appeared on the scene in the second month of 2025. Our radars on Mars immediately informed us of its approach. Its mass, size, and the path it would take were quickly calculated and all the concerned units were alerted. Unfortunately or fortunately, I was given the honour to land on it. For this purpose, the meteoroid was christened 'Eagle'.

"I immediately got into my specially designed spacecraft named Armstrong-IV and shot off the moon from the lunar base Archimedes. The spacecraft carried, apart from me and other instruments, five human-like

computers—Pinto, Simpo, Xeno, Lucy, and Able—who were given various tasks to execute. They were, however, so designed that if the occasion demanded, they could guide me as well.

"Every minute and bit of the landing mission was otherwise pre-planned. I was told to wait on till the meteoroid approached the earth and chase it down to land as soon as it started receding away from the earth. From then on, I was to be on my own. Of course, I was not simply to sit and watch the fun there during my stay. Not only had I to take its samples home but also install

instruments on it. By all means, it was to be an exciting, wonderful mission.

"Everything happened as scheduled. Waiting on the path 'Eagle' was expected to take while receding, I watched its movements with an eagle's eye. Soon the long awaited hour came. I received the signal to rendezvous with it. I fired the jets of my spacecraft and followed 'Eagle'.

"When my spacecraft was about a kilometre from the meteoroid, I matched the speeds. Then, cruising along as if motionless, which though was relative, I slowly accelerated my spaceship and thus steadily and cautiously approached the surface of the meteoroid.

"The view the meteoroid provided of itself was nothing new to my eyes, as I had already visited many nearby planets in the solar system. There were pale, silvery-grey tinted craggy dunes on its surface. At places there were small pits, as if a cannon had blasted it here and there. Nothing else was exceptional about it, except that it appeared like a floating island in space on which my ship was about to land.

"As I let my spacecraft hover over those dunes, trying to decide upon a spot for a safe landing, I lowered the specially incorporated claw-like anchors of the craft. My spacecraft would have then appeared like an octopus. In fact, the claw-like anchors had been designed by observing the 'sucking' action of an octopus's arms as they cling to a body. With a hissing tone, the tips of the claws inhaled the vacuous air outside and the craft settled down securely in a small 10-yard-wide crater. While all the claws gripped the ground of Eagle, I put a brake on the jets and automatically the gyroscope stabilised the craft with respect to the ground. In a sudden frenzy, I put all the jets off and silenced everything except—thanks to god Almighty—the gripping arms that anchored the craft securely to that almost gravity-free meteoroid. Finally, I was there, riding securely on this island, but swimming otherwise through the unexplored depths of mysterious cosmos.

"As my mind slowly settled down to the surroundings, I found myself in a bizarre island world. I could not communicate this historic landing to the anxious people on the

earth, as Jupiter, the biggest planet in the solar system, was then facing me, blocking the path of my radio signals. This was anticipated—that's why I was told to hang on to my own during this mission.

"The first part of my duty on that meteoroid was to put my foot on it for installing instruments. I donned my spacesuit with the oxygen mask. It had one special feature. Exactly in the middle of the back, there was a wire with one end tied to an automatic spool in the wall of the spacecraft. As the meteoroid was almost gravity-less, this was to be my life line. While I moved, it would keep me secure to the ground, not allowing me to drift or fall off the meteoroid. There was also a security arrangement. On pressing a button, the spool would wound the wire on, so that I would be slowly and steadily pulled towards my spacecraft. This was, quite apparently, a measure for my safety return, to be used in an emergency.

"Before I opened the air-lock to go outside, I alerted the intelligent Simpo to keep a watch on me. There was, of course, a radio channel through which I was to be in continuous link with it, so that I could seek its guidance whenever I liked.

"Although I had visited many asteroids and satellites, never did I feel so light-footed as I felt when I put my foot on this meteoroid. The first few steps I toddled no doubt, but soon my training came to my aid. I began to walk as usual. I climbed out of the crater my spacecraft was in and began a walk just to make a preliminary survey. Quite stupidly, however, I walked away from my spacecraft and lost sight of it.

"When I looked over my head, I found the face of Jupiter staring at my face, its red spots glaring at my achievement. I felt ill at ease by the sight and, for the first time, I felt sorry for having taken up this horrible mission. These thoughts were not to last for long as I was soon to experience the most horrifying incident of my life. Somebody was tugging at my life wire! Who could it be? Simpo could not do that unless I had told him to. Could it be a malfunction? I couldn't decide, as fear crept into me."

*Dillip M. Salwi*

*(To be concluded)*

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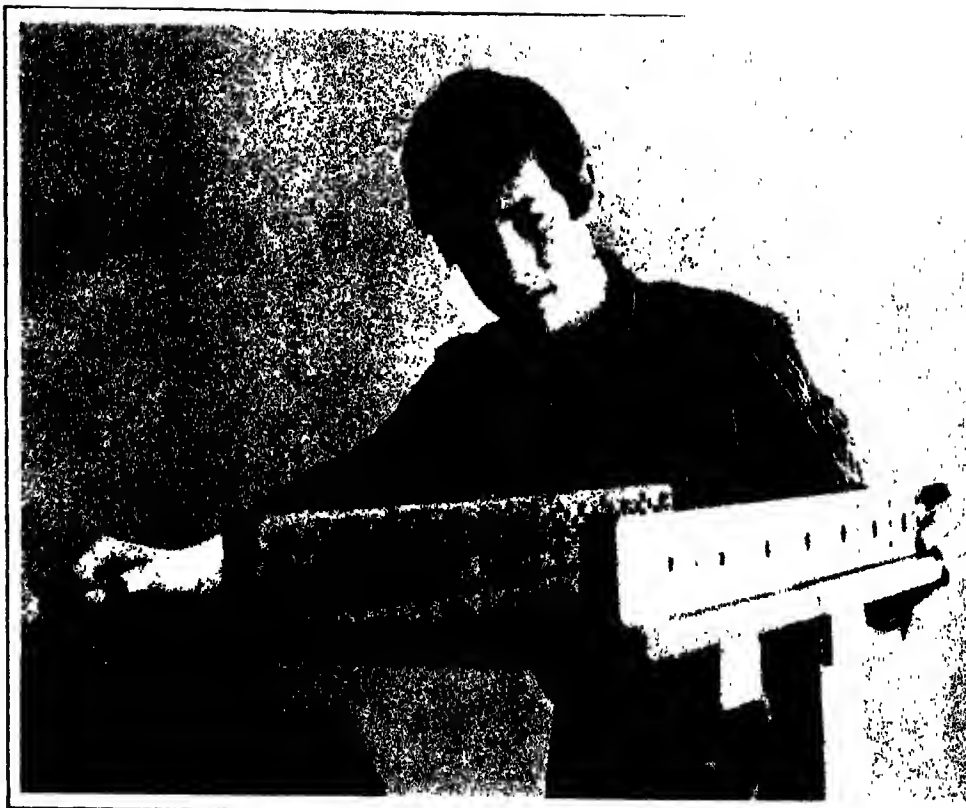


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# I N V E N T O R S



Vitaly Petrovsky (above), a 16-year-old student of the Baranovichi Professional Trade School in the Byelorussian Republic of the USSR, has received his first 'author certificate'. He designed an original project of swinging bridges, using the force of the water below. The invention, it is said, allows to reduce the number of skilled operators and the cost of construct-

ing and operating the bridges. Interested in mechanics even when he was a child, Vitaly began with designing models of planes and gliders.

The picture below shows some young technicians of the auto-design laboratory at the Moscow Palace of Young Pioneers with the high-speed models they have designed.



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# IYC-THE YEAR OF THE CHILD-1979

ON January 1, I woke up with a feeling of real excitement. The first things I saw when I opened my eyes were my starched shorts, my spotless white shirt and blazer. The school tie and belt hung next to it, and on the floor were my polished P.T. shoes and white socks. I jumped out of bed—all these things I had got ready on December 31 for the Children's Rally at the National Stadium. The beautiful calendar on the wall reminded me of my feeling of excitement '1979—International Year of the Child', it said. No wonder I was feeling so thrilled.

We kids are really lucky, I thought; imagine a whole year meant especially for us! Then, suddenly, my heart sank. Would this feeling of excitement, of being important for a whole year, turn to one of disappointment on January 1, 1980? That made me sit up and think.

Why had these people in the United Nations or whatever find it necessary to mark a whole year for us? I mean kids have always been around the place, in fact, if it wasn't for us kids, there wouldn't be any adults. Besides, as long as there's going to be a world, there's going to be kids. So, why wake up one fine day and declare 1979 as the 'YEAR OF THE CHILD'? How come they never thought of it before? What I didn't know then was that even as early as 1976, the resolution to declare 1979 as the IYC had been passed.

For a boy ten years old, I took a BIG decision. I must know all about why we kids in 1979 matter so much. And the first thing I discovered was that 1979 is the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Now what does that symbol they had chosen to mark the year mean? You folks must have seen it on the first page of the January issue of this magazine. The International symbol has an adult encompassing a child in his arms. That's supposed to mean, grown-ups are going to

pay more attention to us. After years of debating about it, they've finally realized we kids are a world in ourselves. And the adults of the world have to come together to do something for the ever-increasing kids of the world. The Indian symbol is a little more specific. It depicts a boy and a girl on a slate, with a sun shining brightly on them. The sun shining on them means health and nutrition. Education, our people feel, will take us to a brighter and sunnier future. Agreed, education is important for a better future, but does it have to be the only cause for the IYC?

To me and to you, who can read this article, going to school and then to college seems the most natural thing. But, when I read reports of how many kids our age, who talk nineteen to the dozen, don't even know there's such a thing as alphabets, I can understand the need for a symbol like the slate.

## THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- to adequate nutrition and medical care,*
- to free education,*
- to rest or opportunity for play and recreation,*
- to a name and nationality,*
- to special care, if handicapped,*
- to be among the first to receive relief in times of disaster*
- to learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities,*
- to be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood,*
- to enjoy these rights, regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national, or social origin.*

(United Nations, 1959)

Anguri, our sweeper's daughter, keeps pestering me to teach her to write her name. But when I ask her to repeat 'Ka, Kha, Ga' after me, she runs away, or says "Baba, 'Ka Kha, Ga' doesn't sound like my name." And her mother says, "Don't fill her head with nonsense, Baba, she'll be married next year." And Anguri is only 11 years old! So there's some point in having schools for kids like Anguri, don't you think? Food, clean water to drink, better places to live in—there are so many things you and I have that others will get only if the effort is made now. The main objective of the year—I found—is "to encourage raising significantly the level of services benefiting children on a permanent basis."

Problems regarding kids, I read, start even before they are born! Strange, isn't it? But it seems we have so many mentally backward and physically weak children, because their mothers either didn't get enough food, or the right kind of food to eat. On the other hand, in some of the western countries they have got another kind of problem. They have a lot of 'retarded' children because their mothers take drugs.

My head is still swimming with all I've heard and read. For the first time I've realized how important we children are collectively. All along I thought I mattered only to my parents, to my teachers, and a few of my friends. But we are the future, and now I realize why it is necessary to start doing something for all of us instead of a selected few. That is why they had to declare a whole year for us. Not because they can conveniently forget us in 1980 or the year after, or the year after . . . But because with the special efforts they make for us in 1979, they can continue to do so for all time to come. It's supposed to be a kind of reminder for all adults that all children matter equally.

Somehow, after reading all that stuff and getting most of it off my chest, I don't quite feel like giving it all up. I could, of course, sit back in my chair and enjoy all that they are doing for children in the International Year of the Child! But I can't—now, after all nobody has said kids can't do anything for the IYC! I'm a kid, and the Year of the Child is still young! Looks like Anguri is going to learn to write her name after all!

VS



The graphic for the Indian symbol of the IYC came from the pen of Sailash Modi, a student of the National Institute of Design at Ahmedabad. Our readers will be interested to know that Sailash was a prizewinner in the Shanker's International Children's Competition 1987.

## THE CHILDREN'S YEAR

Guard him, St. Joseph,  
Aid him, St. Jude;  
Let not life treat him  
Overly rude.  
Christopher, shield him,  
Peter, lend strength;  
Thomas, sustain him  
With faith full-length.  
Maintain his body  
Wholesome, St. Luke;  
Help him, St. Stephen,  
Bear life's rebuke.  
Francis, instruct him  
Gently with things  
Wild and defenceless;  
John, give him wings.  
Song bequeath, David,  
Job, patience prove;  
Solomon, grant wisdom;  
Abraham, love.

RUI PEREGRINO DA COSTA



# The Importance Of Being a Child

**A** CHILD is like a diamond; it shines from whatever angle you look at it. "The child is," Wordsworth had said, "father of the man"—a paradox which we all did not understand when we read it in our school. But now we all do. Whatever ideas and impressions a child gathers at his tender age, they blossom in his adult life. "Child," Emerson reminded his American listeners, "is a portrait of Divinity." Ruskin equated children's welfare with national welfare. "The greatest wealth," the greatest art critic of 19th century England chided the rich barons of Industrial Revolution, "of a nation are its happy, healthy, and strong children."

What miracles does a child not cause in our daily life, in the lives of all men, be they great or ordinary? After working eight hours, Pandit Nehru used to get refreshed by playing with children at least for half-an-hour. In the face of a smiling child, he saw the vision of a greater and stronger India. His birthday, 14th November, is therefore celebrated as Children's Day throughout India.

An interesting story is told of Caliph Haroun al Rashid, who one day sent his Minister to find out the suitability of one of his nobles for a high diplomatic assignment. The Minister went to the house of the noble, who at that time was playing with his children—it being the evening time. The noble, unperturbed by the august presence of the Minister, went on playing with the children till the game was over. After that, he politely apologised to the Minister. "If I had interrupted my daily ritual of playing with

the children for half-an-hour, the King would indeed have judged me unsuitable for any worthwhile national task."

"How?" queried the puzzled Minister.

The noble replied: "When a man cannot tackle children by making them happy and contented, how can he make his fellow citizens happy by successfully accomplishing the national tasks?"

The noble was promptly appointed the Caliph's special envoy to Persia.

It is said when Motilal Nehru heard this story from the Ambassador of Persia to the Austro-Hungarian empire, on his visit to Vienna and Prague in 1907, he was very much impressed. At that time Jawaharlal, who had accompanied his father, was only 17 years old; he, too, was both amused and impressed with the moral of the story.

Nehru's love of children dates from that day. Throughout the struggle for Independence, however occupied and distracted he might have been due to work and worry, he never neglected to spend a few minutes with children. Nehru firmly believed in what John Milton said in 17th century:

"The childhood shows the man.  
As morning shows the day."

It is not for nothing that the United Nations has designated 1979 as the Year of the Child. It may well prove to be the year of destiny for mankind!

*N. M. Khilnani*

# NUMSKULL

A lion named Numskull drunk with pride  
used to kill and eat any animal he spied.  
Soon, as the animals began to die,  
reasoning with the lion they wanted to try.

Begging him to stop the sinful thing  
as killing of subjects did not befit a king,  
They promised each day to send him a beast  
on which the lion could freely feast.

Hearing them Numskull agreed,  
that what he had done was a terrible deed.  
But, he added, if an animal did not come each day  
then again on all the creatures he would prey.

Hence every day he got some animal for dinner  
while the forest population grew thinner.  
Once, it being Rabbit Day,  
a little rabbit set out on his way.

He got an idea by which the lion he could kill  
and get back home, alive still.  
So, he began to go slow  
and, upon reaching the lion late, bowed low.

Numskull's soul with anger was flaming,  
for the delay the animals he was blaming.  
Seeing a puny tardy rabbit, his meal, at the door  
he let out an angry roar.

Pretending to tremble with fright  
the rabbit told the lion of his plight.  
He said that another lion wanting to sup  
had tried to eat him up.

Not only that, he had called Numskull a thief  
adding that he was a totally false chief.  
Numskull with blazing angry mien  
asked the rabbit to take him to the rude lion.

The rabbit, in a well to Numskull his image did show  
which when he roared, replied with an echo.  
Jumping into the well, to attack his image he tried  
and thus the foolish Numskull died.

Hence intelligence is power, but nowhere  
can power and foolishness make a lasting pair.

*(Adapted from 'The Panchatantra' by Shiv Dhawan)*

# SNOW FROLIC

“A W! Mummy, we can’t go back without seeing the snow-fall. Please, I won’t be able to face my friends,” cried Sunny. “Can’t we wait just another day?”

“Yes, please,” chorused his little sister Vinita and cousins Sheelu and Bickie.

This gang of four who, besides being related, were also close friends, had left Delhi along with Sunny and Vinita’s parents a fortnight ago. They had not taken a summer holiday that year, as they planned to visit Simla, a hill station, during their winter vacation. The idea was to see a snow-fall.

Having lived in the plains all their lives, they had not even seen the mountains, let alone a snow-fall! Whatever they knew about it was either hearsay or what they had seen in the movies. Sunny, being the eldest of the four, had also read about snow-falls and all the frolic that goes with it—snowmen, snowball fights, snow-capped peaks, snow-fields, and so on. Often he dreamt of sliding down snow-mountains, while sending up a spray of snowflakes on either side. Recently, he had watched with keen interest a TV report on the Winter Olympics and was fascinated by the breathtaking ski-jumps some of the sportsmen performed with such calm and ease.

Sunny, Vinita, Sheelu, and Bickie had planned this holiday with great care. They had even decided on the kinds of snowmen they would make and the snowballs they would chuck at people.

Caps, coats, mufflers, snow-boots intact, they arrived in Simla two days after Christmas, positive of bringing in the New Year with a snow-fall. Weather reports stated that a cold wave had hit northern India and a heavy snow-fall was expected in parts of Himachal soon. However, that day a clear blue sky awaited them. Puzzled, yet relieved to hear from the coolie that Simla had yet to experience its first snow-fall of the season, Mr. and Mrs. Mehra and the four children stepped out of the railway station and

into a freezing, chilly atmosphere, where one could almost smell the purity in the air.

“What bliss to be away from that dusty, grimy Delhi!” said Mrs. Mehra, as they reached the Guest House. In the distance they could see the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas.

But seven days passed without even a sign of a snow-fall. At times the sky would become overcast and a cold, icy wind would sweep across, causing people to take shelter in the warmth of their homes, or huddle together around “angecthes” (open coal fires). And not once during that week did it even threaten to thunder, shower, or snow. For Sunny, Vinita, Bickie and Sheelu it was not only a disappointment but a blow to their ego not to have celebrated a white New Year’s Day. Their friends in school would surely laugh at them for being so optimistic.

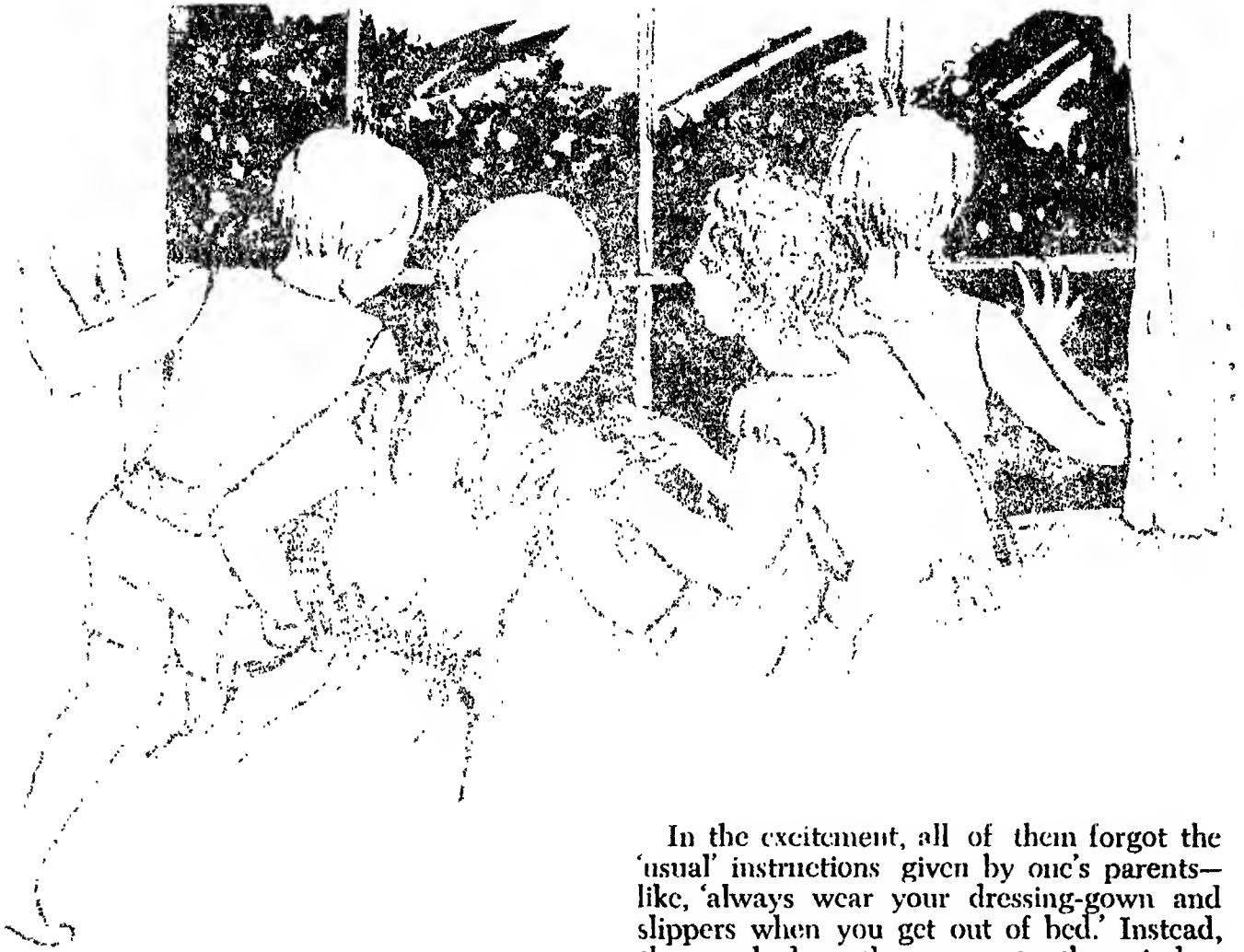
To make matters worse, Simla, unlike other hill stations in India, does not offer many delights to children. Their favourite place, they soon discovered, was the ice-skating rink. The boys, being bold and adventurous, went on to the rink right-away. The girls, on the other hand, first tried to get used to wearing skates, watched the others for a day, and then attempted to skate—thus avoiding some terrible falls the boys had.

Time was fleeting by. There was just one day left for their return journey to Delhi.

“Children, you must forget about the snow-fall now, and get ready to leave,” said Mrs. Mehra as she served the family breakfast.

For a while no one answered. How could they possibly return without seeing the snow-fall? After all that was the purpose of their holiday. No, they just could not reconcile to the idea of going back.

“We can’t prolong our holiday,” continu-



cd Mrs. Mehra, as though sensing the disapproval, "you will miss too many classes."

When the children protested, she turned to her husband for support. Mr. Mehra, however, proved a harder nut to crack. Only after four hours of sulking by the kids did he finally give in to the idea of staying on for just one more day.

"But I'm warning you, if it doesn't snow by tomorrow, we just pack up and leave," he affirmed.

That night, it rained ceaselessly and a wet wind moaned through the garden. Sunny woke up with a start.

When he looked out of the window, he was sure their wish had come true. Quickly he went to Bickie's bed and whispered, "Wake up, it's going to snow." Then, together they shook Vinita and Sheelu awake.

In the excitement, all of them forgot the 'usual' instructions given by one's parents—like, 'always wear your dressing-gown and slippers when you get out of bed.' Instead, they rushed as they were to the window and peered at the sky with their noses glued to the glass panes.

It was about 5 a.m. All around there was a hush. People everywhere were fast asleep while the four children watched, this incredibly fascinating sight. Softly and silently, small cotton like flakes of snow danced their way down to the muddy ground, covering every corner of it. Soon there lay stretched before them a vast white expanse, interspersed by trees and bushes bejewelled with pearls of snow.

For a while, the children were speechless, as they tried to take in as much as they could see. It appeared another land altogether. Then, jerking herself to reality, Sheelu the youngest exclaimed, "Ooh! It's gorgeous! Let's call Auntie and Uncle."

"I bet they've never seen anything like this," added Bickie.

"Yes let's," said Sunny as the four quickly put on their dressing-gowns and tiptoed to the next room.

"Mummy! Daddy! Open the door," called Vinita.

Palefaced and worried, Mr. Mehra opened the door quickly and let the children in.

"It's SNOWING!" the four chorused excitedly.

"Oh! Thank god, it's just that. You almost frightened me," said Mrs. Mehra as she mopped her forehead and turned to get back into bed.

"JUST THAT," cried Sunny. "Don't you want to see it?"

"Oh! Bete, please don't disturb everyone. This is nothing new. We've seen it several times."

The children found this very hard to believe. How could their parents be so calm and blasé about such a beautiful thing?

"I can't understand these grown-ups," said Sunny, as they walked back to their room. "They never enjoy themselves."

*Navkala Singh*

## **"COVER STORY"**

I WAS so glad to find that this month's cover is about lunch—quite apart from my own love of food! I think lunch time is one of the nicest things about a day... we're so hungry that the food tastes extra good; there's so much to talk about—all that happened at school, all the fights we had. Dad is still at his office, so we're a little naughtier than usual.....

I can see a lot of very familiar things in this picture, even though the artist is a girl from Yugoslavia. There is, for instance, my sister—grumbling vehemently (as usual) about all the homework she has to do, about so many onions in the soup.....look at her good old grumpy face and the way she's waving her hand around....

No wonder poor Mama looks so harassed! I can almost hear her groaning—"you're going to knock the teapot, you're going to spill your soup, when are you

going to learn how to sit still...."

And there's our baby brother. He was crying because he wanted my crayons and I wouldn't give them to him (he always eats them)—so Mama tried to pacify him with a doll. Now he's crying again because he wants a truck, not a doll...

Can you see me? I'm on the left, gloating gleefully because—ha, ha!—I don't have any homework (well, not as much as my sister, anyway).

And there's our good old teapot—no, we're not allowed to drink tea, much as we wish we were!—you see, Mama got tired of my sister breaking soup bowls. The teapot was made of unbreakable glass, so now she uses that instead!

I love lunch time—don't you? But I don't think poor Mama really agrees!

*MPS*

# FALSE ALARM!

**P**REPARING for an exam can be an exciting experience—especially if you are the youngest in the family. Each one in the house comes forward with a new theory every day, only to make life miserable for you! But if you are as bright as I am, probably you will end up confusing everybody, including yourself!

It happened some years ago. I was sitting in my room trying hard to solve an algebraical problem, when in walked my sister, Manju, and said, "Baboo, did you know  $(a+b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$ ?"

"Yep!" I said. "And did you know  $a^2 + 2ab + b^2 \div a + b = a + b$ ?"

Well, that shut her up for a while. The next time I saw her, she was frantically calculating. 'Boy! That sure was quick thinking!'

My brother, Titoo, has never been an early riser or the kind who 'burns the midnight oil'. Except, of course, the day he sat up all night copying sums from his friend's notebook!

Titoo is preparing for his examinations—so they say. Obviously it means he's working hard. The other day Amma told him to study late into the night, but he flatly refused. The reason being quite simple. He can't keep his eyes open after 9 at night. At this point of time, Manju butted in as usual:

"Well, Titoo, then why don't you study in the mornings? We used to do that when we were in school. In fact, that's the best time, since it's so calm and peaceful. You can get up at four and study till eight. That shouldn't be too difficult, I think."

You should have seen Titoo's face. 'When I need your advice, I shall ask for it,' he felt like saying. But before he could, Amma intervened. "Yes, Titoo. She's right. You can start from tomorrow."

"Oh Ma! Not so soon. The exams are still two months away. Perhaps I'll start from Monday," he said.

But on Monday Titoo was very upset. Not that I blame him. After all a guy needs to have some rest. But Amma and Daddy were firm. "You can sleep early, but you

must get up at four," they said. And so here he was, shouting for his dinner, which was still not ready. "Manju, isn't it ready as yet?" Titoo yelled at the top of his voice.

"Just five minutes, Titoo. Let me make the chappatis and you can tuck in. In the meanwhile, why don't you lay the table?"

"Listen, it's already nine o'clock. I've got to sleep now. Forget it, I'll do without dinner today."

"Stop fussing, Titoo. Your Amma's not well. Can't you go and help your sister, instead of sitting at the table and shouting?" said Daddy coming into the room.

But Amma was more considerate. "Manju, Beta," she said, "give him his dinner first. He must get some sleep, otherwise he'll be sleeping over his books in the morning."

"Here, eat and go to sleep. You act as if you are the only person in this house who has to study. What about me? I've to take my exams, too. As it is, the 'Princy' is giving me dirty looks!" and Manju almost shoved the plate in front of him.

"Okay, okay, granted. But why don't you understand? I have to take my tenth class exam. My future rests on this. As it is, the teachers don't teach anything in school nowadays." Titoo thought he had made a point.

"Now forget all this crap and hurry up with whatever you're doing. Dinner's getting cold. Teachers don't teach anything nowadays! Big deal... Huh!..." And Manju walked out of the room in a huff.

Titoo hurriedly gobbled up his food and rushed out of the room, shouting, "Send the milk to my room, Manju." Then he paused for a while, and added, "Don't forget to add two spoonsful of sugar and Bournvita."

"You've got a hope!" said a voice from the kitchen. "Chotu's on leave, and if you think I'm going to carry a glass of milk right up to your room, just because you have an exam, you've got another think coming."

But Titoo didn't hear, because he had already gone to his room and was search-

ing desperately for his pyjamas. 'This sister of mine, I'm sick of her!' he muttered under his breath. 'I bet she'll shout if I ask her now.' Eventually he called out to her, "Manju, Manju, where are my...."

"Shut up! Your pyjamas are in the bathroom," Manju cut him short, and promptly added, "Come and take your milk afterwards. I'm not going to heat it again," as if she knew what was coming.

'By Jove! Have you ever met anyone like her before?' he whispered, as he changed into his pyjamas.

A short "woof!" answered in agreement. It was Leo, the pet of the family. Tail wagging, ears cocked up, eyes looking straight at him, he seemed to ask, 'What's all this commotion in aid off, man?'

"I've got to study for my exams, old boy. Have to get up at four in the morning. Will you wake me up in case I oversleep?"

And Leo only licked his face. He had heard that one before. Then he cuddled himself comfortably under Titoo's bed and closed his eyes.

Meanwhile, Titoo was busy winding the clock. He set the alarm for four, but on second thoughts he borrowed Amma's clock, too, and set the alarm for 5 o'clock. "Just in case I miss the first one," he told me later on. Then he placed the clock next to his bed. He cleared his table and arranged his books. Bravo! Titoo was all set for the morning.

That night, Titoo couldn't sleep. I watched him toss and turn in bed. When I





grew impatient, I nudged him and asked, "What's bothering you? I thought you went off to sleep, just as you hit the pillow."

"I don't know anything," he confessed. "I can't make up my mind. Where do I start studying from?"

"From scratch," was my suggestion. Then I turned and went off to sleep.

Early next morning, both of us were woken up by a shrill sound coming from somewhere in our room. Sleepily, I shook Titoo. "What's happening?" I asked.

"It's probably to wake up the guy next door. Why on earth does he have to set an alarm for everyone in the neighbourhood?" he answered equally baffled.

But before long, we heard another shrill noise. Then I felt someone tugging at the

bedsheet. I woke up with a start. I was too scared to get up, so I shook Titoo. He immediately switched on the bedside lamp. And who do you think it was? Leo! He had been tugging at the bedsheet in an effort to wake up Titoo. The mysterious noise we had heard was none other than the alarm clock!

"Oh, no!" said Titoo feeling rather stupid. "And I thought it was only the neighbour's clock! How could I have been so silly!"

Anyway, the morning had been spoilt, and so was Titoo's mood.

"Try again, tomorrow," I said sarcastically, burying myself under the quilt.

"Tuesday is not an auspicious day anyway," he said. Then he switched off the light and went back to sleep.

*Navin Anand*

## **A Moonlit View Through My Window**

One late summer evening  
I came up after dinner  
    swinging, singing;  
My bed was laid neat and clean,  
Seeing that I began to yawn and to lean.

I slipped into bed, I put out the light  
For I knew it was night.  
I sensed something, I wondered what it was  
Moon, star, or merely a torchlight!

Sleep went out of the curious little me,  
I went to the window and began to see,  
I found that it was a full moon night  
And the full pale moon seemed very bright.

Wave after wave came the gentle breeze,  
It blew right against my face and moved  
    the leaves,  
The naughty shimmering moon peeped

through the branches and saw me too,  
It seemed as if saying, "Don't hide, I've  
    seen you."

So we started to play hide and seek,  
There was no sign in me of laziness or  
    sleep.

All became silent and calm,  
And my mind was full of wonderful balm.

I felt happy but least thought  
What wealth from the show I had got.

In the evening as I lie on my couch in a  
    pensive mood,  
The scene flashes across my mind, and I  
    brood.

I gaze and gaze at the beautiful scene,  
And run to the window very keen.

*Prerna Tandon (12)  
India*

# 'Gift for Daddy'

**I**T all started when Mr. M., our English teacher, said after the composition period, "I've given your name for the short story competition next Monday. Mohini and Flavian from class XI and you and Rakesh from class X are the only competitors we are sending from our school."

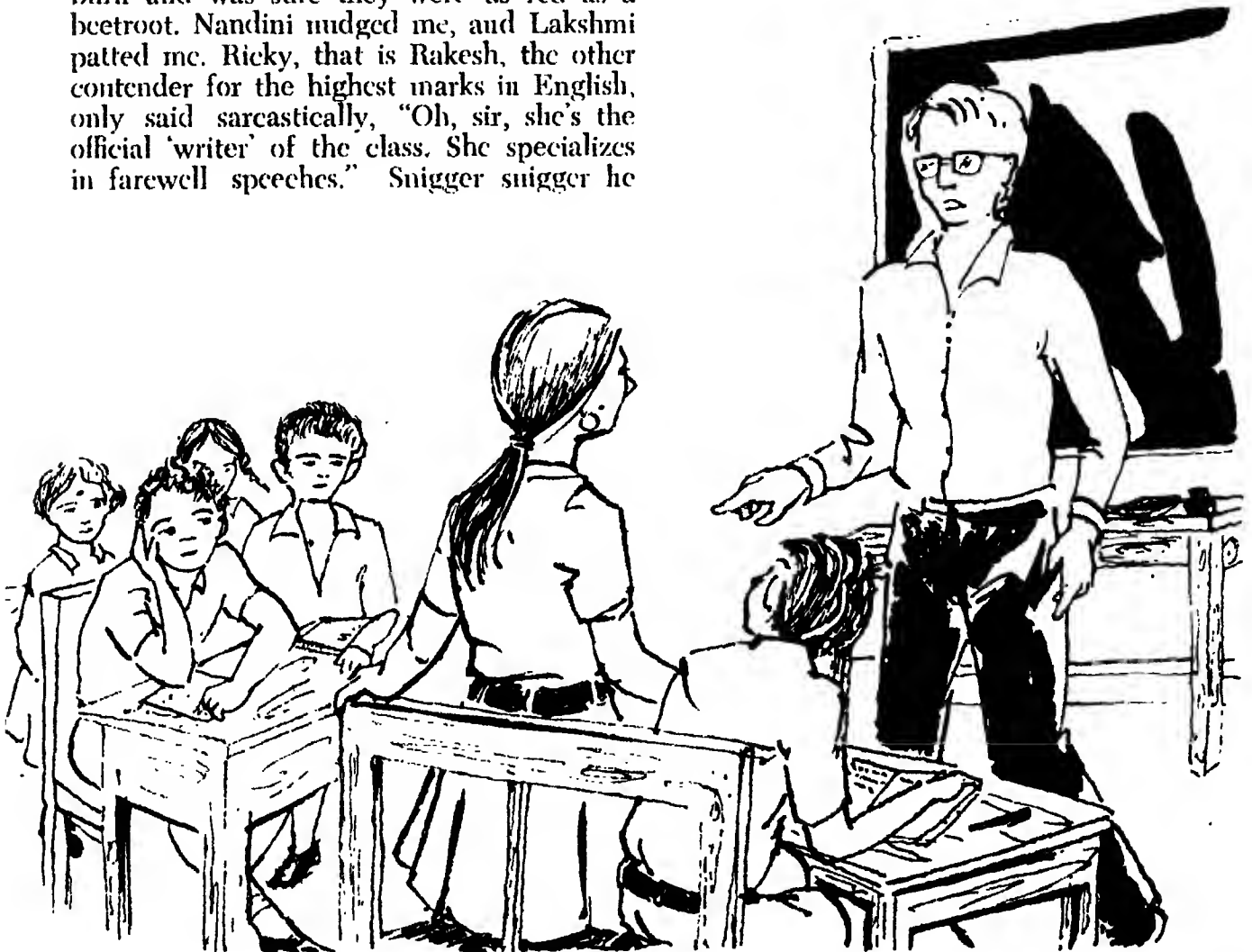
Ever since Mr. M. had joined our school as the English teacher, my vague dream of wanting to write had received a real fillip. When he corrected and returned the first essays we had written for him, he said, "I was very pleased to read Gouri's essay; I'd like the whole class to read it."

Then, turning to me, he said, "Gouri, you've a flair for writing. Are you doing something about it?" I could feel my ears burn and was sure they were as red as a beetroot. Nandini nudged me, and Lakshmi patted me. Ricky, that is Rakesh, the other contender for the highest marks in English, only said sarcastically, "Oh, sir, she's the official 'writer' of the class. She specializes in farewell speeches." Snigger snigger he

went, the horrid fellow. He was just plain jealous, that's all. Mr. M. was young; in fact, just out of teaching school and the kind of teacher you can safely call a sport. He ignored Ricky and said, "Gouri, I'm a great believer in talent. I think you're gifted and should be encouraged. Please don't hesitate to come to me for any help, apart from your classwork."

"Yes, sir," I managed to whisper. And sure enough, every time I had any problems or sometimes even when it wasn't a problem so much as I thought, I'd go to him.

At home I'd talk about 'our wonderful English teacher Mr. M.' And Mom would only say, "I'd rather have you pass in all



the subjects, than get distinction in English." That's just old Mom, but when Daddy said one day, "Beta, whether you can or cannot write, write like in writer. I do not know, but I wish you'd take your mind off Mr. M. and concentrate on your studies."

That was too much. I can take a lot of things from a lot of people, but that sort of thing from Dad made me wish the earth would open up and swallow me. Since it didn't quite happen, I wondered if I should go for the story-writing competition at all. If I didn't, Mr. M. would be mad and would give me up as a lost cause. And if I did... but I didn't want to... I just wanted Daddy to know that it wasn't I who thought I was a big deal writer. But before I could sort out my feelings, it was Monday and there I was walking with Ricky, Mohini, Flavian, Mr. M., and Mr. Batra, our sports teacher, to the neighbouring school where the competition was being held.

When I entered the hall, I was feeling dejected, disgusted, and lost. It just didn't help that most of the faces were familiar, belonging to kids who had been my rivals for debates and declamation contests. A simpering Ricky wished me luck, and I nodded with a grin. To hell with everything, I thought, 'now that I'm here, I might as well enjoy myself.' A deathly silence descended on the room as each of us 'budding young writers' got down to writing our great masterpieces.

When it was over and we had handed over our papers, I felt empty—drained. Before we had gone in for the competition, the organisers had told us there was to be a tea party afterwards. So, we trooped towards the dining room and chatted excitedly. "What subject had you chosen, Gouri?" Ricky asked. And I said, "I dunno." Ricky gave me one of his dirty looks and muttered, "The genius doesn't know." It was a pretty harmless statement as far as Ricky was concerned, but when I was feeling down in the dumps, that's not what I wanted to hear. I abruptly broke off from the group and approached Mr. Batra.

"You said you weren't staying for the party, sir. Could you possibly see me home?"

"Why aren't you staying for the party, Gouri? It should be fun and Mr. M. will see you home."

"No, thank you, sir," I replied. "I'm not feeling too well and I'd like to go home."

"Right," said Mr. Batra. "Ricky, please tell Mr. M. I'm seeing Gouri home."

Outside, it was already dark, the December night foggy. The street lights looked quaint little sky-lamps in the mist. Mr. Batra hailed a three-wheeler and after a frosty ride, I was home. Tired and cold, I longed for a hot water bath, hot food, and a long night's sleep. But, as I skirted the lawn and the house came into view, I stopped short. My father was pacing the verandah! I ran up, wondering why he preferred the cold verandah to the warm house. He heard my pattering footsteps and shouted—something pretty unusual for him. "Where were you? Your mother and I have been so worried. Nobody's answering the phone in school."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. Didn't I tell you I was going for the short story competition today? I'm sorry I forgot," I finished lamely, my teeth chattering—with cold, fear, or illness I did not know.

"Mr. M. again," my father muttered. "When will you ever grow up? Now, go in, change and have your dinner. Mummy and I are going out." And that meant Q.E.D. say no more, so I couldn't even tell him it was Mr. Batra who had seen me home.

That night it was a very sorry creature that crept into bed, making sleepy resolutions like: 'I'll never write anything ever again', and praying fervently: 'Dear God, I know I've written a rotten story, but just to prove to my Dad that I'm serious about becoming a writer (good, bad, indifferent we'll decide later), please, please let me win a prize.'

I don't know when I fell asleep, for the next day I had a burning fever that raged for many days. I had jaundice and it was only in February that I could rejoin school. The day I went back to school was also my father's birthday. I'd been planning to knit a waistcoat for him, but jaundice had put paid to that idea. He drove me to school, stiff and stern in his colonel's uniform. I longed to give him something special that

would break the frosty icicles that had settled on our friendship after that horrible December evening.

Once in school, the roaring welcome I got drove all other thoughts out of my mind. There was so much to talk about, so much to do. But, immediately after assembly, the Principal summoned me. "It's good to know you're well, Gouri. I've kept something safe for you for ten days now," he said, handing me an envelope and a packet. I wondered what it was. The envelope was marked 'SHORT STORY COMPETITION'. My heart sank. Not that again, please. "Read it soon, Gouri. I already know what it says," said the Principal. With trembling fingers I tore it open and read. . . . .

'Dear child'. The typed 'child' had been scored out and somebody had written 'Gouri' there. 'Dear Gouri,' it read. 'This is to inform you that your story "Gift for Daddy," has been awarded the second prize at the competition held on. . . .'

I could read no more. "Congratulations, Gouri," said the principal, "we are very

proud of you."

"Thank you, sir," I whispered and fled. Nandini, Lakshmi, all crowded round. "Hey, listen to this," said Nandini grabbing the letter. "They've published her story in their magazine. That's what the packet contains, you nut. And this is an invitation to your parents for the prize distribution ceremony."

I was thrilled, but very quiet when Daddy picked me up on his way home for lunch.

Once we reached home, I handed the letter and packet to him with a grim expression. He took them as though they were sick-leave applications.

"Happy Birthday, Daddy!" I said softly.

As he read the letter, his eyes misted. He looked at me quizzically and shouted for my mother. She probably hadn't heard, so he went in search of her. I could hear their excited voices in the dining room, but I didn't leave the warmth of the February sun on the verandah. My problem had been solved—I had found a 'gift for Daddy', even if it was only printed paper.

*Vaijanti Savant*

## TO FEEL AT HOME

My father said,  
"I want you  
To go into a temple  
And feel at home.  
"I want you  
To go into a church  
And feel at home.  
"I want you  
To go into a mosque  
And feel at home.  
"I want you  
To go into a synagogue  
And feel at home.

"I want you  
To go into a Fire-temple  
And feel at home.  
"I want you  
To go into the forests  
And feel at home—  
Among trees  
The squirrels,  
The birds,  
And the tiger burning bright."

*Shankar Nagarajan (14)*  
*India*

## THE HIDDEN TEMPLE

Underneath the great peepal tree  
Stands the hidden and forgotten temple  
Filled with the golden rays of the evening  
sun  
It is the most peaceful sight one can see.  
In its cool and dim interior  
Stands the serene altar of the god,  
The loving god who sees all as one,

None as superior and none inferior.  
O'ergrown with creepers and moss its  
dome,  
Plants hug its crumbling walls,  
The sound of birds is only to be heard.  
This abandoned house of the Lord is  
everyone's home.

*Deepa Prabhu (13)*  
*India*

## A DEBT REPAID-3

"WHY, Gurudeva, that's nothing!" said Duryodhana with a little swaggering laugh. "I could do it single-handed! I thought you wanted us to do something really big!"

"You may try," said Drona smiling, "And no one will be more pleased than I if you succeed."

Duryodhana dashed off, calling for Karna, a great friend of his, and his brothers. Arjuna looked at Drona, bewildered.

"You never gave me a chance to try!" he said. "I was dying to serve you! I badly wanted to pay my Gurudakshina too!"

"Don't worry, my son," said Drona with a serene smile, "Drupada is a great warrior. It will need a warrior far more skilled than Duryodhana to capture him!"

Sure enough, Duryodhana returned after his attempt—defeated and dejected. "It is your turn now," said Drona, smiling at Arjuna's eager face, "and I have no doubt that your brothers will help you... to succeed. I have set my heart on it. Don't disappoint me, Arjuna!"

"I shall not fail you, Gurudeva!" cried Arjuna with confidence. "I'd die—rather than come back defeated."

Arjuna was fully trained in the tactics and strategies used in war. Apart from skill, he possessed a great deal of intelligence, too. He thought out his plan of campaign carefully—discussing every minute detail with his brothers. As a result, Drupada, who had no fear of being defeated by a 'pack of children', soon found himself captured by Arjuna and totally at his mercy! But Arjuna had no intention of hurting him. He merely bound his hand and feet, and took him to Drona.

"Here is my Gurudakshina!" he said, pointing to the captured Drupada.

Drona's face lit up with incredible satisfaction. Though he had every faith in Arjuna he had not expected him to return victorious quite so soon. "Well, Drupada!" he said look-

ing at the downcast face of the king. "Your kingdom is mine now and your very life at my mercy! But I am a forgiving man and do not want to take revenge. I loved you as a boy and I still want your friendship!"

Drupada said nothing and refused to look up.

"Drupada!" said Drona. "You yourself told me that there can only be friendship between equals. So I shall retain half of your kingdom and give the other half back to you. Then we shall be equals—and friends!"

Drupada begged his pardon but his heart seethed with anger and humiliation. He went back to his kingdom, determined to pay Drona in his own coin some day.


Drona embraced Arjuna. "I am pleased with you, my son. You shall be the greatest warrior on earth. None shall surpass you. I, Dronacharya, swear it!" Arjuna bowed low and touched his feet. Often men make rash promises—not knowing how much that can hurt some time. When Drona uttered his prophecy, he only thought of his pride in Arjuna. Little did he know that another innocent and loving soul was equally devoted to Dronacharya.

This other lad was Ekalavya, a 'nishada' youth. He had heard of the great Dronacharya, the incomparable master of Warcraft. Ekalavya dreamt of being a great warrior himself and longed to learn from Drona. When he heard that Drona had agreed to teach the Pandava and the Kaurava princes, he went to see him.

"What do you want?" said Drona surprised when the nishada lad bowed and touched his feet. "And who are you?"

"I am Ekalavya, a nishada. I want to be a pupil of yours."

"Well, I have no time to teach you," said Drona dismissing him, not knowing his skill and abilities. Ever since he had agreed to become the teacher of the Kaurava princes



many lads pestered him to teach them. He thought Ekalavya was one such. Not every one could be a warrior! Drona had no time or patience for moonstruck lads who imagined themselves good enough to learn from the great Dronacharya!

Ekalavya was hurt and dejected. It seemed so unfair to reject him without testing his capability. And yet...vowed Ekalavya...Dronacharya and Dronacharya alone could be his Guru. He would accept no other, no one less! Knowing full well the futility of approaching Drona again in person, Ekalavya built a life-size image of Drona. To this image he offered his homage each day and practised what he already knew. Ekalavya was a natural warrior—knowing by instinct what others had to be told and taught. Constant practice soon made a perfect warrior of him.

But no one had heard of Ekalavya. No one knew what a great and skilled warrior he had become by the sheer force of will power and practice—and his implicit faith in the image of his Guru. Least of all, Drona himself. It

was Arjuna who happened to see him one day. Ekalavya's arrows matched his own and he seemed to have better skill at his finger tips than Arjuna himself! His aim, thought Arjuna looking at him critically, is even better than mine. His technique, something even I cannot match!

"Who are you?" said Arjuna stepping before him.

"I am Ekalavya," said the archer.

"Your skill is wonderful!" said Arjuna. "Who is your Guru?"

"Dronacharya," said Ekalavya without hesitation.

"What! Are you speaking the truth?" cried Arjuna.

"I never lie," said Ekalavya looking straight at him.

Arjuna went and stood before Drona. "Gurudeval! You promised me that I should be your best pupil and that none should surpass me!"

"So I did!" said Drona.

"And yet Ekalavya is far better than I!" cried Arjuna. "You've taught him techniques you NEVER taught me! It is unfair! Surely you ought to have given me a chance to learn the things you've taught him!"

"You are talking rubbish!" said Drona. "Who is this Ekalavya? I don't know him and certainly I haven't taught him anything!"

"But he told me you are his Guru!" said Arjuna. "He would not dare to lie!"

"This is very intriguing!" said Drona. "Where is this boy? I must see if he really exists or if you have merely dreamt the whole thing!"

"It was no dream! I could not dream such skill as I saw in him," said Arjuna. "He lives in the forest yonder."

Drona made for the forest, wondering if Arjuna could have imagined it all. How could he have a pupil of whom he knew nothing—and such an expert one at that? Drona came upon Ekalavya when he was practising and stopped in wonder just as Arjuna had done. But his eyes saw more than Arjuna's had. He saw the lad's concentration. His deftness. His quickness. His unerring instinct. He saw his own image strewn with flowers. Drona's heart ached in a manner he had not thought possible. Here was greatness! Here was a warrior—a born war-

rior, whom none could surpass! Arjuna, for all his lessons and skill, could never match him. And he, Drona, had vowed that Arjuna should be the BEST warrior that lived! He would be proved a liar—to himself, to Arjuna, and to the world at large! And yet... this young lad...!

Drona's honour was at stake and he must do something about it. He stood before the surprised Ekalavya, who threw away his weapons at the sight of him and prostrated himself at his feet.

"Gurudeval!" he cried in an ecstatic voice.

"You really think of me as your Guru?" asked Drona. There was a tremor in his voice.

"Of course!" said Ekalavya, with folded hands.

"Would you pay me your Gurudakshina if I asked for it—the way the others have done?"

"My life itself is yours!" said Ekalavya.

"I don't want your life, Ekalavya. But give me the thumb of your right hand." Drona spoke as if in a trance. Had his heart turned into stone?

Ekalavya looked at Drona and read the implication of his words. Giving his thumb meant never being able to handle a weapon again! Drona was asking him to sacrifice the dream of his life—the thing he loved most of all! And yet... how could he refuse his Guru anything on earth? Without a moment's hesitation or faltering, Ekalavya took up his sword, chopped off his thumb, and laid it at Drona's feet.

"Bless you, my son," said Drona but he could not look at Ekalavya in the face. His heart wrung in agony, as he walked away, feeling like a vile murderer. 'I have wronged you, my son,' he said to himself, 'I have wronged you grievously in order to satisfy my own vanity!'

Drona was astonished to find his cheeks wet with tears. 'Ekalavya,' he said to himself, 'I bless that you shall be as great as Arjuna! Not a warrior like him! But you shall live for ever in the hearts of men as the last word in Devotion! So long as man lives, he shall remember you, revere you as the boy who gave up his everything—his greatest ambition—to pay his debt to his Guru!'

Swapna Dutta

(Concluded)





ent. It's really going to be lonely now!" was Basu's sad reply.

They sat silently on the steps for a while. On their right was the sprawling school building. In front was a beautiful lawn with a lovely garden and behind the school building were the many sports fields converging with the large mango grove behind the hostel. The hostel was a multi-storeyed building built only a few years ago. In this vast, empty complex, the sight of the three lonely figures sitting on the steps seemed pathetic.

Mona and Tony were sister and brother. They were orphans and since the death of their parents had lived with their only relative, an old aunt. About a month ago their aunt too had died in her sleep leaving them with no home to return to.

The school's governing body had taken the responsibility of the two children. It was decided they would continue staying in the hostel during the holidays. There was no problem about supervision. The librarian was a resident staff because he was in charge of the school's lending library for

## HOLIDAY ADVENTURE

**T**HE whole school seemed to be out on the porch. There was a lot of excitement as everyone departed for their summer holidays. Cars and taxis packed with luggage, children running around excitedly, a constant buzz of human voices, and people bumping into each other.

Amidst all this hustle and bustle, Mona, Tony, and Basu stood on the steps, waving a good-bye to all their classmates and yelling "Happy hols!"

As the last car drove out of the gate, a dreadful silence spread over the school and for some time none of the three could speak. The school just didn't feel the same.

"What a difference people make, no?" asked Mona, breaking the ice at last.

"Yes, I don't want to go inside the hostel yet. It looks so empty, deserted and differ-

the town children during the vacations.

Basu's father was in the Merchant Navy and his mother had gone with him on a cruise. They were expected to return only half way through the vacation. Till then Basu was supposed to go to his grandparents' house.

When Basu came to know that Mona and Tony, his best friends, were staying back for the holidays, he wrote to his parents asking them if he could also remain with them until they returned. They agreed readily because they knew Basu would feel lonely at his grandparents' house. It was quite far from the town and there was no one of his own age with whom he could play. Overjoyed, the three children started planning their vacation long before the end of the term.

Basu and Tony studied in the eighth standard and Mona in the sixth. They were not too happy at the prospect of having Mr. Shashi Bhushan as their sole companion during the holidays. He was a mean, snappy and unfair man who was always bullying children. They decided to keep out of his way as much as possible.

Tony and Basu shared a room. Since Mona was the only one left in the girls' wing, she shifted into the room next to their's.

The school had closed for the vacation on Saturday. Mona, Tony, and Basu were waiting cagerly for Monday, when the library would open and they could make new friends.

Behind the hostel was an indoor swimming pool and a mango grove. They wanted to show off these two things, so that the children from the city would come here more often.

The orchard had always been out of bounds for the children. Basu, Tony, and Mona wanted to talk the 'mali' into allowing them to play there whenever they wanted.

"Let's go to the orchard for a walk now



and make friends with the mali," said Mona breaking the long spell of silence.

"You know what?" said Basu. "I have an old faded shirt which I don't want to wear anymore. Let's take that for the mali's son. I know it will be a bit too long for him, but I don't think he will mind."

So, after collecting the shirt, the three went off to the orchard. It was enclosed in a high, barbed wire fencing and the only entrance was through a rickety old gate. The mali's house was inside this barricade and the front door faced the gate, so that he could keep an eye on whoever came in.

As soon as Tony opened the gate, the mali came running with a huge lathi in his hand. Seeing them, he shouted, "Out! I say, Out! Don't you know you are not allowed inside?"

Promptly Basu waved the old shirt at him. As the mali caught sight of the shirt his eyes grew large and a slow knowing smile spread over his face. Nodding his head slowly, he said, "Come into the house quickly." The three scrambled into the house after him, beaming at each other. Basu gave a sly wink and Mona whispered, "Wow! it worked so beautifully!"

Inside the house, the mali turned round and told the three in a serious voice. "Now, children, you can come and play in the orchard any time before six in the evening. I don't want to see you anywhere near this place after six. Do you understand? Also, if Bhushan Sahib catches you here, he will be very angry and punish you severely."

After a pause he continued, "You must not, I repeat NOT, tell him that I have allowed you to come. I will certainly lose my job if you do. Now run along, it's getting late."

Happily the three trotted back towards the hostel. They were about to enter the hostel building, when they almost collided with Mr. Bhushan who was rushing out.

For a moment Mr. Bhushan's face registered nothing but shock. In an instant his expression changed into a vivid mask of anger. The three dared not even apologise. They just stood there, gaping silently at him.

Karuna Behl

(To be concluded)

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE**

**TALENT SEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS IN THE FIELDS OF  
CLASSICAL INDIAN DANCE, MUSIC, PAINTINGS,  
SCULPTURE AND DRAMA**

Applications are invited from candidates for award of Talent Search Scholarships Scheme during 1979 in the field of traditional arts which are practised in rural/tribal areas such as Chhau, Mayurbhanj, Seraikela dance, Puppetry, Mask Making, Traditional Bronze Casting, Stone Sculpture, Ivory Carving, Kalamkari painting, and Pot painting, Madubani painting etc. as well as in the field of classical forms of dance, music, drama, painting and sculpture. Candidates in the age group of 10-14 years, as on 1st July, 1978 and studying in recognised schools are eligible. In the case of children of families practising performing arts and in the case of children residing in the rural/tribal areas, the condition regarding attendance in a recognised school will not be applicable.

The number of scholarships to be awarded is about 150.

The scholarship is awarded on yearly basis and will be extended from year to year until the completion of the secondary stage of education or upto the age of 18 years whichever is earlier, subject to the awardee maintaining satisfactory progress.

The value of scholarships is :—

- (a) Rs. 600/- per year for the child who undergoes specialised training in the school and/or town where already studying/ residing.
- (b) Rs. 1200/- per year where a child is required to join another institution at some other place for purpose of specialised training.

The tuition-fee for the specialised training in the particular field would also be paid by the Government.

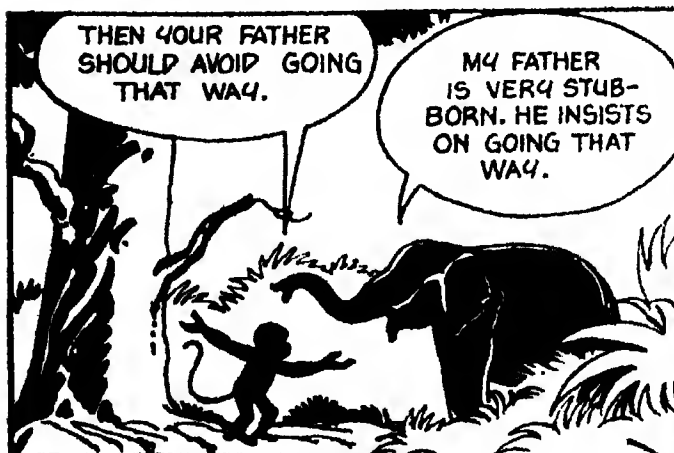
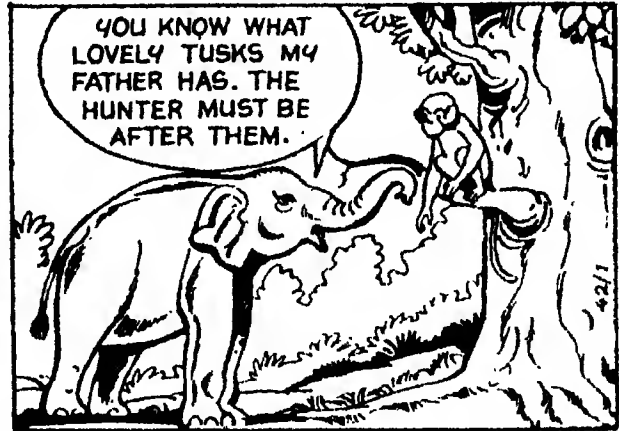
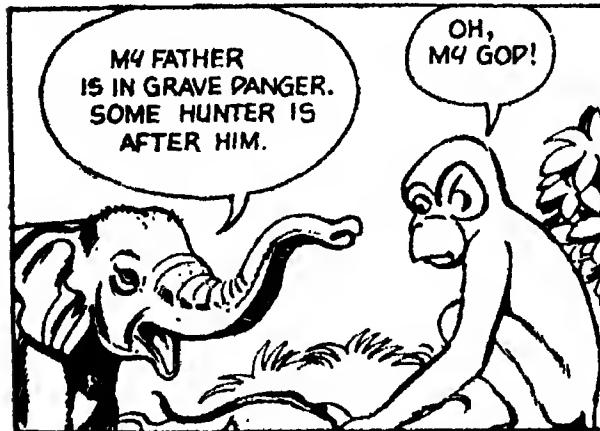
The prescribed application forms can be obtained from the office of the Director of Education/Director of Public Instruction of the State Governments/ Union Territory Administration concerned. The last date for receipt of application by the Director of Public Instruction/Director of Education is 15.3.1979.

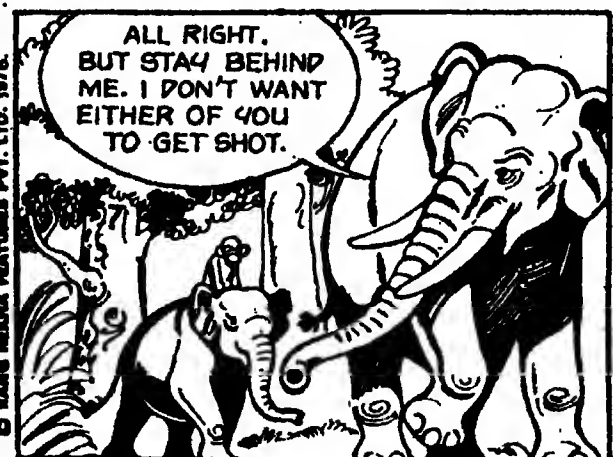
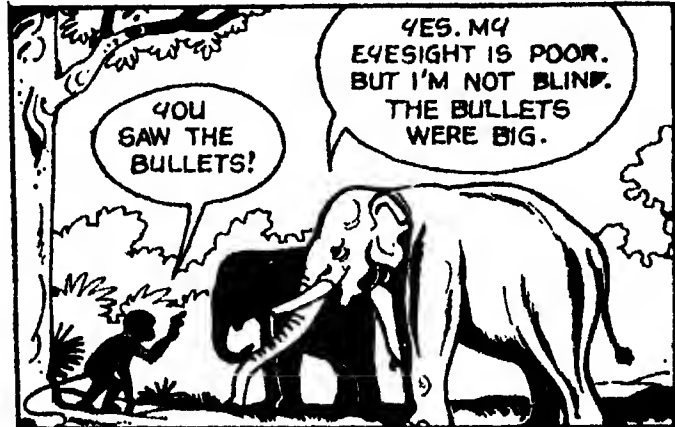
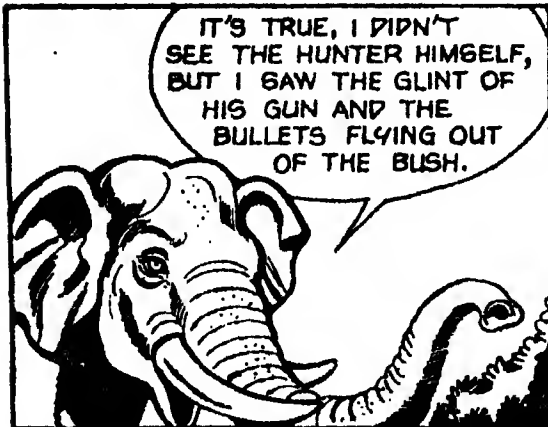
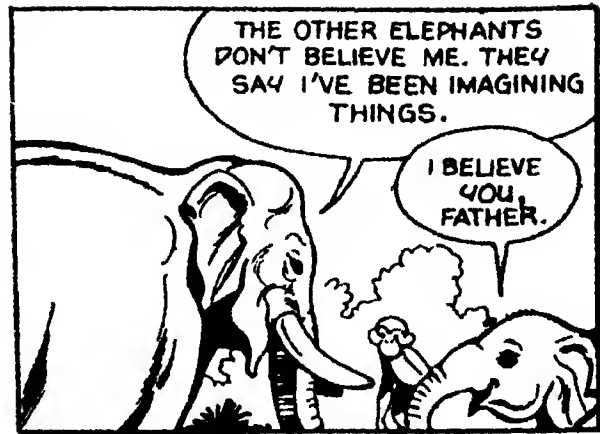
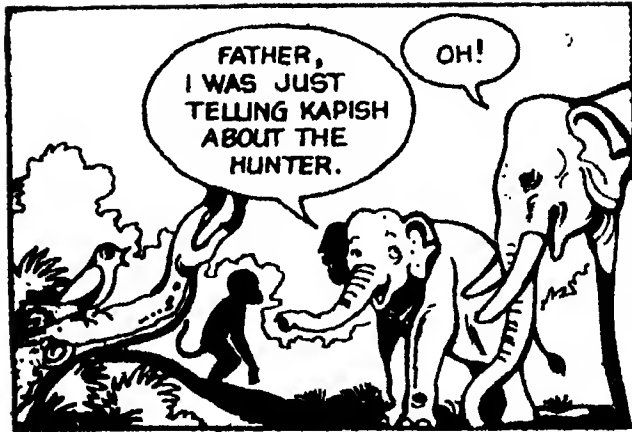
Canvassing in any form will disqualify a candidate.

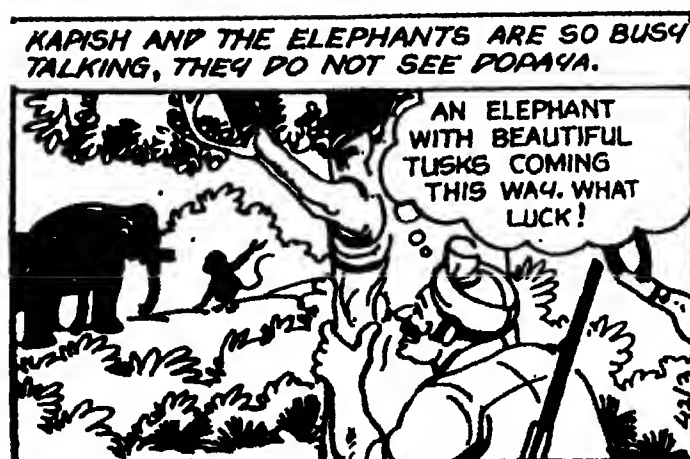
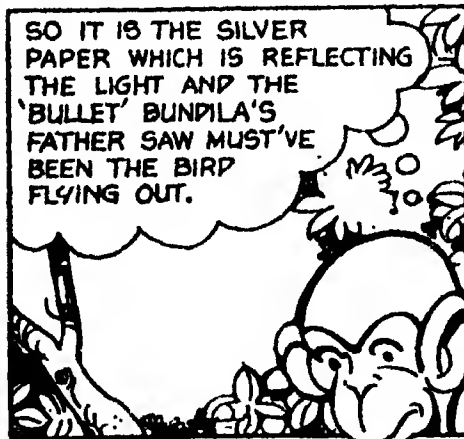
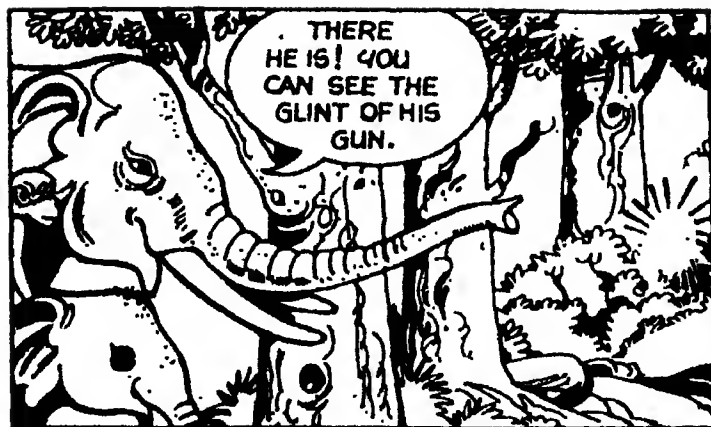
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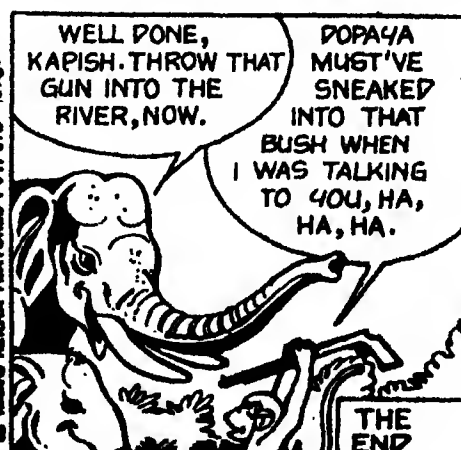
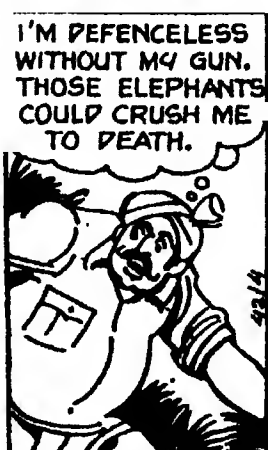
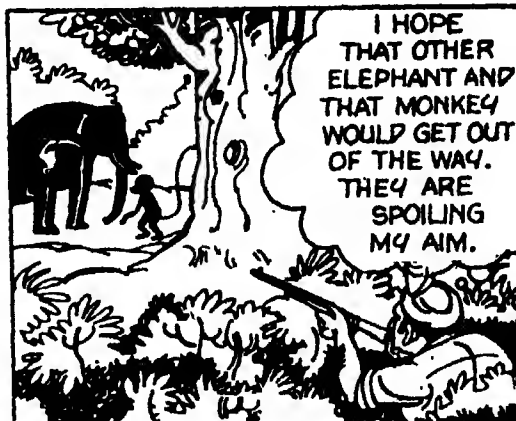
● ANANT PAI  
● MOHANDAS













# DASAPPA AND HIS WALKING STICK

**D**ASAPPA was a petty landlord. He had a small farm in a village near Bangalore. He lived in a nice little cottage with a neat garden, close to the farm. Dasappa lived all alone as his wife had died many years ago and he had no children.

Some years back, there had been a fair in the small town near Dasappa's village. At this fair he had bought a walking stick with a beautiful handle. It was beautifully carved with inlaid ivory work. Dasappa treasured his walking stick and looked after it lovingly. Whenever he went out of the house, he took the walking stick along. When he returned, he would hang it on a nail on the wall.

One day Dasappa got ready to go out and reached for the walking stick. It was gone! Dasappa looked for it everywhere in the house—under the bed, under the settee, inside the almirah, even in the kitchen and the bathroom. But the stick was nowhere to be found. Dasappa thought he had lost it forever! He was very unhappy.

Dasappa sat on the bed thinking and decided he simply could not live without the stick. So he made up his mind to buy a similar one. He took some money from the cash box and walked to the small town nearby.

Dasappa looked for the stick in every shop. But no one had a stick similar to his own. One of the shopkeepers, however, advised him to look for the stick in Bangalore. So he decided to go there. Dasappa hitched a ride to Bangalore in a bullock cart.

In Bangalore, Dasappa searched high and low for the stick. He tried every well-known shop but to his disappointment could find it nowhere. He decided to return to his village. So he stood on the road waiting for a lift.

A car screeched to a halt in front of him. The car owner was a very pleasant man and offered to drop him home as his village

was right on his way to Madras. While travelling, Dasappa told the car owner all about the trouble he had finding a stick similar to his in Bangalore. The car owner offered to take him to Madras where he had greater chances of finding the stick. Dasappa accepted.

In Madras, he tried his best to find the stick. But not a single shop had any that looked like his own. So he decided to go back to his village. Before returning, Dasappa wanted to thank the car owner who had entertained him. He went to his house by bus.

In the bus Dasappa saw a foreign tourist who was carrying a stick like his. Dasappa asked him where he had purchased it. The tourist replied that he had bought it in Bombay and gave him the address of the shop. Dasappa thanked the tourist but told him he didn't have the means to go to Bombay. Immediately the tourist searched his pocket, took out an air ticket and handed it to Dasappa. He told Dasappa he had originally planned to return to his own country via Bombay, Rome, Geneva, Paris and London. But now he had changed his mind and was going to return via Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Hawaii.

Dasappa's host in Madras, the car owner, gave him the address of his sister Ammu in Bombay. She would help him find the stick, he said. Dasappa landed at Santa Cruz airport in Bombay, took a taxi and went straight to Ammu's flat in Bandra. Ammu helped Dasappa find the shop. But unfortunately it was closed. Closed forever! The shopkeeper had gone out of business.

But Ammu had a wonderful idea. The next day she was leaving for Rome on a holiday. As an airlines employee she was entitled to two free air tickets. So why not he accompany her? Dasappa and Ammu flew to Rome. When they arrived at Leonardo da Vinci International airport in Rome,

they saw a movie unit shooting a film. The Director of the movie unit approached Dasappa and asked if he would substitute for an actor who was to fly in from New York, but could not make it as he had suddenly taken ill.

Dasappa gladly agreed.

After the shooting, Dasappa and Ammu went about the city looking for the stick. But they had no success. Just as they were about to return to Bombay, they got a trunk call from Paris. A famous comper of a televi-

sion network in Paris invited them there. He wanted to interview Dasappa on "How an Indian living in a village near Bangalore got to play a role in an Italian movie!"

In Paris, after the interview, Dasappa and Ammu looked for the stick in the shops. They searched all the fashionable boutiques of Champs Elysees, and in the wayside market in Montmartre. But they were unlucky. By now Dasappa had become very despondent about the stick.

They were about to leave Paris when they received a call from a group of Indians settled in Southall, London. They wanted to host a banquet in honour of Dasappa, for being the first Indian to act in an Italian movie. With the help of the Indians in London, Dasappa and Ammu looked for the stick in every reputable shop in London. No luck! Finally Dasappa and Ammu decided to return to Bombay.

While they sat in the passenger lounge of Heathrow airport, waiting for their flight to be announced, a man came forward and



shook hands with Dasappa. He introduced himself as the actor for whom Dasappa had substituted in the Italian movie. The actor was very pleased to meet someone who looked just like himself. He invited Dasappa and Ammu to accompany him as his guests to New York, where he was to meet his friends. On their way to New York, Dasappa related the whole story of the walking stick to the actor. The actor promised to help them go round the shops of New York. Dasappa was equally unlucky in New York. Not a stick like his own was to be found in any one of the shops in New York.

The actor bought Dasappa and Ammu air tickets back to India via San Francisco, Hawaii, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and New

Delhi. In every city where the plane halted, Dasappa and Ammu searched for the walking stick. But they were as unlucky as they had been in London, Paris, or New York.

Back in Bombay, Dasappa dropped Ammu at her flat in Bandra and prepared to return to his own village. Then it occurred to both of them that they could not live without each other. They had become attached to each other, travelling together for so many days.

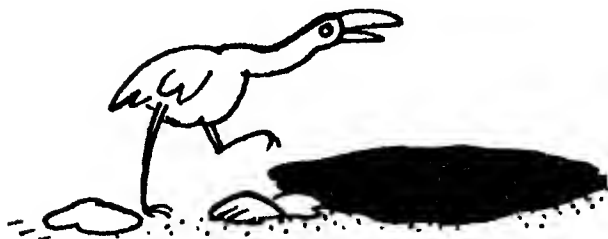
So they were happily married.

When Dasappa returned to his cottage, opened the door and entered with his bride, the first thing he saw was his walking stick —on the bed!

*Shakuntala Devi*

# ANIMAL WORLD

By MONAYE



# BABYRAJI'S COMPANIONS

MRS. Babyraji's house was the brightest and cleanest in the whole town. There was a little white gate with 'ROSE HOUSE' written on it and a pretty garden with a gravel path leading upto the front door. On one side of the path there were white jasmines growing in large tubs and roses of all colours bloomed on the other side. If you knocked on the polished brass knocker, Mrs. Babyraji opened the door. She was a tiny old lady with white hair and a pale face and she always wore very clean clothes. Mrs. Babyraji had lived at 'Rose House' for years and years, but she lived there all alone. She had no soft purring cat to lie on her lap and keep her company through the evenings. She had no dogs to eat her leftover meals and bark at strangers who came to her door.

All her neighbours had a cat and a dog. They used to say to Mrs. Babyraji, "Why don't you have a cat and a dog to keep you company?"

And Mrs. Babyraji always said, "Look at my lovely clean house, and my neat, tidy garden. What! Do you think I'm going to have a cat that will leave its hair all over my clothes? And do you think I will have a dog that will scamper all over my garden and leave bones all over my house? No, thank you!"

So Mrs. Babyraji went on living all alone in her bright gleaming house and her neat garden.

But one evening, when the winter wind howled round 'Rose House', and the rain streamed down the window panes, Mrs. Babyraji heard a noise at her door. First it was a little scratch, then it was a tiny sound "miaow—miaow."

"Goodness gracious!" said Mrs. Babyraji, "I wonder what it is." She opened the door and there outside was the tiniest, smallest, wettest little black cat that she had ever seen.

"Deary, deary me," said Mrs. Babyraji. She began to feel very sorry for the wet kitten. She forgot about her clean house. She picked the wet kitten up in her arms and carried him inside. She laid him down and brought him a saucer of warm milk from



the pantry. The little black kitten stretched himself and shook his wet fur all over Mrs. Babyraji's kitchen but she didn't mind at all! The kitten lapped up all the milk and began to purr. Then he rubbed up against Mrs. Babyraji's legs to show how grateful he was, before he curled himself up on the bed and fell fast asleep.

Mrs. Babyraji never once thought of sending him away. She forgot she used to say, "What! Do you think I'm going to have a cat that will leave his hair all over my clothes?" She let him play all over the house and sleep on the bed. And she called him Stooty.

So now Mrs. Babyraji had a cat. All the neighbours used to say, "Well, I never! Mrs. Babyraji, perhaps you will have a dog one day, now that you have a cat."

"Perhaps, perhaps," was all that old Mrs. Babyraji would say.

One day Mrs. Babyraji went up the lane to fetch milk from the depot. As she walked along the lane, she heard such a clattering and banging that she wondered what was happening. Round a bend on the road came a black and white puppy with a can tied to its tail. After him raced three big boys who were laughing at him. Mrs. Babyraji lifted her umbrella—she always carried an umbrella even when it was a very fine day. She waved it high in the air and shouted to the boys to stop. When the boys saw her, they ran away. But the little black and white puppy stopped, went up to Mrs. Babyraji and looked up into her face. His tail tried to wag to say, "Thank you," but his can made such a noise. Mrs. Babyraji undid the string from the puppy's tail and patted him. Then she went along the lane to get her milk. And the puppy went, too. He followed at her heels, all down the lane, and up the drive, and round to the dairy.

"Ah," said a neighbour, "so you've got a dog at last. You will like having a dog to keep you company, I know."

Mrs. Babyraji tried to explain about the puppy and then she thought, "Yes, a puppy would be company for me. Yes, perhaps, Stooty would like a puppy to play with."

So the black and white puppy padded along behind her all the way down the lane and across the garden to 'Rose House'. Mrs. Babyraji met another neighbour who said, "Well, I never! Mrs. Babyraji, so you have a dog as well as a cat now. You'll like having a dog to keep you and Stooty company, I know."

Mrs. Babyraji opened the gate and walked up the path to the back door. The puppy walked behind her. He didn't scamper all over her garden. Stooty had been sunning herself on the kitchen windowsill, but when she saw Mrs. Babyraji, she jumped down and came running to meet her. Then Stooty saw the puppy. She looked at Mrs. Babyraji, who said, "Shall we keep the puppy, Stooty?"

Stooty looked at the puppy, who wagged his tail very hard as though he were trying to say, "Please, please keep me, Mrs. Babyraji." Stooty walked all round the puppy dog to have a good look at him. Then she began to purr. So Mrs. Babyraji knew that Stooty would like the puppy dog to stay.

She opened the door and took the milk inside. She filled a saucer with milk for Stooty and put it on the kitchen floor. She found a bone for the puppy, and put it down inside the milk. The puppy looked at Mrs. Babyraji and he looked at the bone, then he wagged his stumpy tail so hard that Mrs. Babyraji thought it would be shaken off. Then he picked up the bone and put it on the mat outside the kitchen door.

So Mrs. Babyraji was very pleased. She kept the black and white puppy and called him Bimboo.

Now when her neighbours open the gate of 'Rose House' and walk up to the door and knock the bright brass knocker, Mrs. Babyraji opens the door. But she doesn't come to the door alone. On one side of her is a fat black cat called Stooty that purrs all day long. Peeping from behind her clean sari on the otherside is a black and white dog called Bimboo, who wags his stumpy tail at every one except strangers. And so, they are Mrs. Babyraji's companions.

*R. Selvaraju*

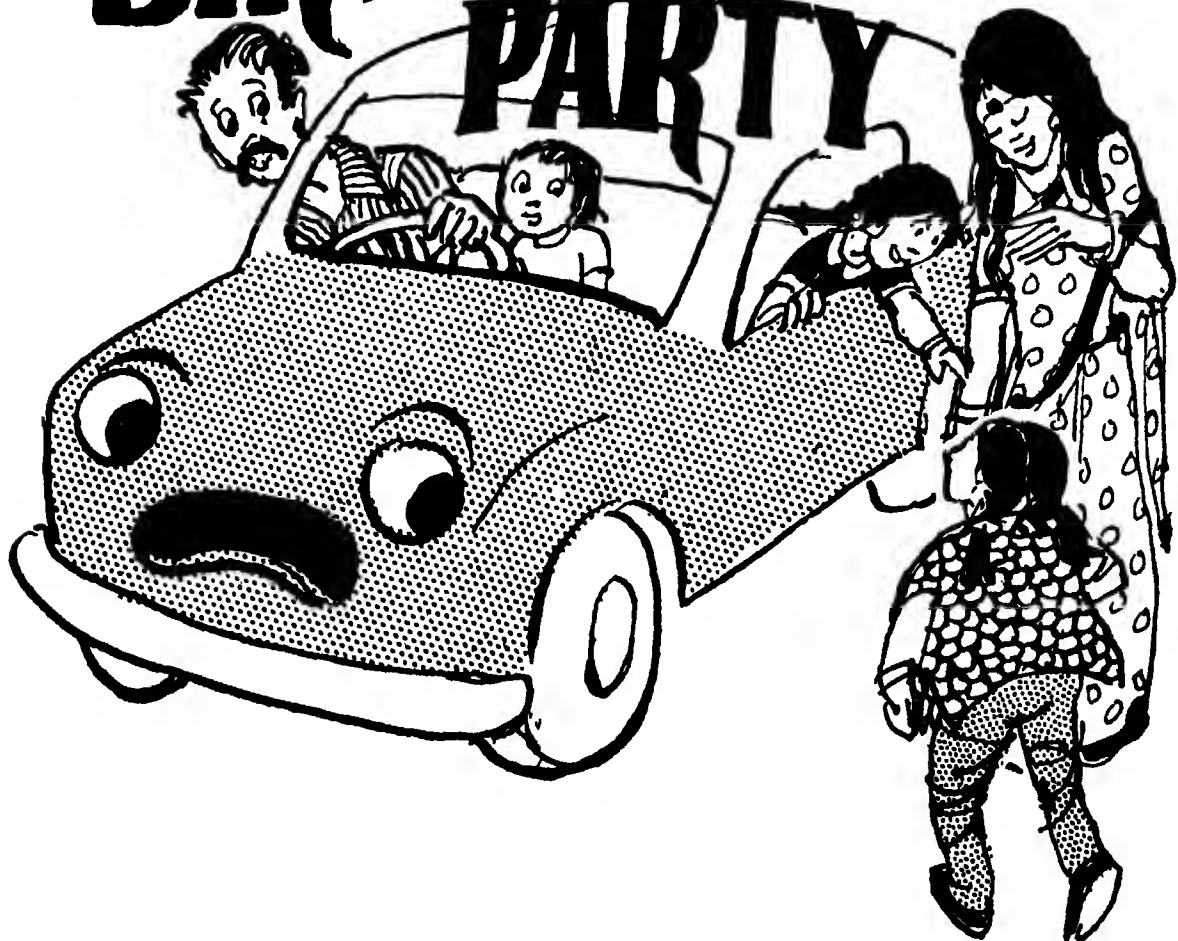
**S**ONALI was very excited. The winter-vacation was on, but Nikhil hadn't forgotten to invite her for his birthday. He had actually sent a special, colourful card addressed exclusively to her, to attend his birthday party. And she had been generous enough to tell her little sister, Radhika, that she would take her along. The mother didn't come into the picture at all!

The party was one week away and the invitation card was kept on the mantelpiece with all the other Xmas and New Year cards. Every time Sonali spotted the card, she would start rattling off, "Radhika, we've to go to Nikhil's birthday party. I will wear my red and white frock, and you wear

your blue frock." Radhika would trail behind her sister, understanding a lot, but hardly being able to speak, she would merely shout, "Paaty, Paaty."

Sonali had become very playful during the holidays. She didn't want to write even two pages of homework a day which her mother insisted upon. It was the same old chase from morning till evening. "I'll write in the afternoon," she would say. When afternoon drew near, she would quickly say, "I'll write in the evening," much to her mother's annoyance. All she wanted to do was play house-house with little Radhika, or cut up magazines, or play with mud. It was difficult to be strict with them,

# NIKHIL'S BIRTHDAY PARTY



because they would always run to their grandmother for protection.

But the day Nikhil's invitation arrived, it was a trump card for their mother. "All right, don't write, today, tomorrow, and all the days to come. You'll also not go for Nikhil's birthday party," she would say with finality and walk off.

"Mummy, but I'm just going to write," Sonali would say sweetly. "Radhika was troubling me, that is why I was not writing." Poor Radhika, the blame was conveniently put on her.

Till the day of the party, Sonali's mother didn't have any difficulty with the day-to-day ordeal of her daughter. If Sonali didn't finish her breakfast, all she had to say was, "Fine, then you won't go for Nikhil's birthday. . . . ."

"All right, all right, I will eat everything," and Sonali would lick the plate clean.

If Sonali didn't want to sleep at bed-time, Mummy would promptly say, "I've already told Daddy, you cannot go to. . . . ."

"Good night everyone," Sonali would rush off before she heard the rest.

At last, the day of the party dawned. Sonali got up very early that day and followed her mother all over the house as she did her morning chores. The topic of discussion was again Nikhil's birthday party. "Mummy, will Isha and Alok also come to the party?"

"Yes, they'll come," her mother replied absentmindedly.

"What time will we go?" again another question, though she did not know how to tell time.

"At 5 o'clock," her mother said.

"When will we come back?" Sonali asked.

"Now let me do my work," her mother said, slowly losing patience. "We'll come back when the party finishes."

That reply satisfied Sonali and she rushed off to play with Radhika. In their house-house game, they enacted a party. In the afternoon, they went to sleep for an hour lest they became "cranky" at the party! They got up with smiles, instead of the usual grumpiness, and obediently got ready.

"Mummy, who'll take us?" Sonali asked.

"Hmm, so now you think of taking me along," Mummy said.

"But, how will we both go alone?" Sonali lamented.

"Daddy is coming home soon. Then we shall all go together. We'll drop you there and visit some friends. We'll pick you up when the party is over. Now, is everything clear? And both of you go and sit outside while I get ready." All this was said by Sonali's mother in one breath.

"Mummy, what present are we taking for Nikhil?" Sonali asked, a little afraid of her reply.

"I've already bought it yesterday," Mummy said. "Now no more questions or we are not. . . . ."

"All right, all right. Come, Radhika, let's wait outside for Daddy," and both the sisters went out.

Mummy was ready in a jiffy and Daddy also arrived quite punctually. All four were set to go and all the good-byes were said to all at home and Mummy went to the mantelpiece to pick up the card for the birthday party.

"Where's the card?" Mummy said aloud, as she sifted through the cards lying there. "It was here in the morning."

"Come, Mummy, let's go," Sonali said, not understanding the gravity of the situation.

"Mummy, paaty," Radhika chimed in, to add to the slowly mounting tension. By then, everyone had started searching for the card. In drawers, under books, in handbags, and every possible place they could think of. But no card was to be found.

"Now, how can we go for the party?" Mummy stated.

"Noooo, let's go," Sonali said, not understanding why the card was so important when they were all ready.

"Now, don't get impatient. Be good, children, and we'll take you," Mummy said. "We don't know Nikhil's address, that's why we want the card," she explained.

"But he lives in Dwarka Colony. He told me so," Sonali said, trying to be helpful.

"Darling, there are many houses in Dwarka Colony. You wait, we'll think of something," Mummy said, and looked at Daddy for some suggestion.

"Do you know his surname?" Daddy asked.



"Yes, I remember that. It said Seth, and I also remember reading C Block," Mummy said as though playing a game of solving a mystery.

Daddy got into action. He picked up the telephone directory and noted down all the addresses which had the surname 'Seth' and who lived in 'C' block of Dwarka Colony. They were five in number.

"The only alternative is to go to all these five houses and see if one of them is Nikhil's," he said.

Sonali and Radhika were patiently watching all that was going on. When they heard the word 'go,' they both jumped up to go. It was already 5.30 p.m. and the party would surely be over in an hour's time.

It was a ten minute drive and Sonali had again started her numerous questions, which Daddy was answering patiently. Radhika was busy looking out of the window. When they reached 'C' block, tension mounted again and Sonali was asked to sit quietly if she wanted to reach Nikhil's house quickly. Everyone knows how oddly placed the numbers are in a colony. After spotting 162, you expect to see 163, but it will turn out to be 213!! And round and round the 'C' block Daddy drove the car, trying to find the numbers of the houses he had jotted down. And as ill luck would have it, not one of the houses had any Nikhil living there.

Sonali and Radhika were getting quite impatient. "Why can't we find Nikhil's house?" she wailed and began crying aloud with large drops of tears trickling down her eyes. Radhika couldn't cry in sympathy, but she kept shouting, "Paaty, Paaty." It was slowly getting dark and Daddy parked the car on one side of the road, not knowing what to do. Mummy was also feeling miserable after seeing the whole day's excitement. Sonali had really looked forward to it for so many days.

Suddenly, Sonali gave a shout. Through her veil of tears, she had seen her school friend walking down the road.

"Mummy, that is Ekta. She is in my class.

She also lives in Dwarka Colony," Sonali said excitedly.

Mummy quickly opened the door of the car and walked up to Ekta who was holding her ayah's hand. "Hello, Ekta. I'm Sonali's mother. Are you going to Nikhil's birthday party?"

"No, aunty, we're coming back from the party," Ekta said shyly.

"Can you please tell me Nikhil's address," she addressed the ayah.

"Yes, madam, it is 'C' block, 293," she replied.

Mummy thanked them and got into the car. "The ayah has told me the address," she told Daddy with relief. They had passed that number earlier, so now they could reach it easily.

Sonali was after all not disappointed. When Daddy stopped the car in front of Nikhil's house, everything seemed to have been over. Streamers lay all over the place and there was no sound of kids. But the happiness on Sonali's face on reaching Nikhil's house wiped out all these trivial things. Without turning round, she held her sister's hand and ran indoors, calling out his name aloud.

*Alaka Shankar*

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# "DOCTOR" MARUTI

**K**RISH was riding his battered bicycle. He loved the cycle and was ever ready to go anywhere on it. One day, he was returning home from the shopping centre with a bag full of groceries his mother wanted. He carefully negotiated the main road and turned left into a side street, past the big yellow house with the three pomeranians that always barked shrilly at him; and then turned right.

From there it was a straight road to his house. Treacherous, he didn't want to go home so soon. That road now, the one that started off the big yellow house—he had never been on that—he would just explore.

So Krish went exploring. An ordinary road—not very wide or narrow, gave way to a beautifully maintained one with large houses on either side. There were big shady rain-trees on the pavement and their flowers gave off a delicate perfume. It was a quiet little dreamland.

Krish couldn't bear to turn back, and went further. The road lost its planned charm and became a mud road with shrubs and brambles growing wild. He was going to turn when he heard someone calling out to him.

Krish saw a short, stout, well-dressed man standing a few yards away. Krish rode closer to him. The man he saw had a big bushy moustache as well as a pair of piercing eyes. A stethoscope protruded from his pocket, announcing his profession to the world at large.

"My car tyre is punctured, and I have to see a patient urgently. Can I borrow your cycle?" he demanded. He might just as well have said, 'Give me your bike!' That's what his tone sounded like, backed strongly by his piercing eyes and quivering moustache.

Krish, of course, didn't want to. The road was bad, and the gentleman was not exactly thin. And then Dr. Purushottam (as Krish soon found his name to be) could be a trickster and the blue car with the sorry-

looking tyre might be somebody else's.

"Look!" spluttered the doctor. "I'm telling you it is urgent and you stand there gaping! I'm taking your cycle whether you like it or not!"

"I'm coming too!" said Krish weakly.

"Sure," said Dr. Purushottam. "But you see, I haven't cycled for years and certainly haven't taken anyone doubles for a long, long time. You'll have to jump on after I've mounted, and even then you may fall off!"

He strode to the bike and tried to mount. It was quite obvious he had told the truth when he said he hadn't been on a bicycle for years. Each time he hoisted himself up, his legs couldn't maintain the balance and he clattered down with the cycle. The sixth time, much to the surprise of the doctor and Krish and also the cycle, Dr. Purushottam remained steady, for a second or two. He began pedalling furiously, yelling at the same time to Krish to hop on behind. Krish ran beside the cycle as it wobbled and turned crazily in all directions. After a few false starts he gave a leap and landed on the carrier. A quick inspection showed that all the contents of the bag were safe except for a packet of biscuits that were crushed.

Together, the two of them, Krish and Dr. Purushottam bumped and wobbled dangerously for a few minutes. After that the doctor finally got the hang of it and they moved down the road. Both looked as if they'd fall off any minute, but they didn't. When they finally reached their destination, Krish breathed a sigh of relief.

Apparently the house belonged to one Mr. Raman whose nameplate hung on the gate post. Inside, Krish found the house set in a large, but untidy garden.

Dr. Purushottam hopped off the cycle and Krish slipped down hastily.

"Wait for me!" commanded the doctor and went in with the gentleman who had

come out to greet him. Krish watched him helplessly.

"Why not go away?" he wondered. But he realized immediately that he did not know this area and might get lost. And that would be an unbearable shame. So perforce, he stayed.

Idly, he leant against the compound wall, taking in the surroundings. Suddenly he noticed a monkey on one of the mango trees in the garden. The monkey amused and entertained him with his antics, so much so the twenty minutes he had to wait went by like a few seconds. Krish straightened himself and went to the cycle as the doctor came out.

The monkey saw the doctor, too. He saw not only the doctor but also an interesting object protruding from his pocket. Noiselessly he crept behind the doctor. Only Krish saw the monkey's hand move, but before he could call a warning, the monkey had made off with Dr. Purushottam's stethoscope.

A lot of shouting followed. The doctor's monstache quivered and danced and his eyes glinted as he chased the monkey. Mr. Raman and his servant, Adi, joined the chase. Mrs. Raman watched the proceedings anxiously with her little daughter, who clapped her hands in delight. She thought they were putting on an act for her.

Krish joined the 'posse' and they all yelled to the monkey to drop the stethoscope. But the monkey looked at them disdainfully and ran some more. Suddenly he decided that the stethoscope was too cumbersome to carry and threw it around his neck like a garland. He looked every inch a doctor, if an eccentric one, as he jumped nimbly and screeched recriminations at his pursuers.

"A stethoscope is expensive," said Dr. Purushottam. "I can't just let it go! Hey! Whish! Whish!" he shouted.

The monkey looked down from his perch, his shrewd eyes darting hither and thither. Adi began climbing the pillars of the portico. As he reached the roof, the monkey darted off it and jumped to the ground, the stethoscope still dangling from its neck. Again, the chase started. The doctor had deep faith in the chant "Whish! Whish!"

which he repeated at set intervals as he ran after the monkey.

Harassed, the monkey looked around and spotted the battered cycle belonging to Krish. He swooped on it and began—unlike the doctor, to pedal wonderfully. After the initial surprise of all concerned, the pursuit started once more.

"You mustn't exert yourself, please, please go back to bed," begged Mrs. Raman at the window as a burst of elderly laughter came from the bedroom.

"And miss everything? Not on your life!" retorted Mr. Raman's father and gave vent to another cackle as the procession came into view again. It was, of course, led by the monkey on the cycle, stethoscope and all. He was followed by Adi, Krish running close behind. Then came a panting Mr. Raman. The doctor brought up the rear with some energetic "Whish! Whishes." Krish was not so amused now that his cycle had to suffer so cruelly at strange hands. But Adi and Mr. Raman's father and his little daughter enjoyed it all immensely.

Perhaps the monkey enjoyed it, too. He certainly looked as if he did. He was now pedalling so fast it seemed to be dangerous even to stand anywhere near. They all left him to cycle, hoping he would fall or slow down when they could hope to catch him. However, the monkey suddenly changed his direction of movement and came so close to Krish that Krish moved away fast. And stumbled to a fall.

The cycle clattered. Krish turned round in anguish, then began to gape foolishly. For the monkey was advancing upon him with immense glee. He placed the stethoscope on his chest and listened carefully. Then he held Krish by his hand and smartly turned his other wrist to look at an imaginary watch. All this didn't take more than a minute and so Krish came back to reality soon enough. He tried to snatch the stethoscope but the monkey shook his fist at him and drew away hastily, just escaping Adi's carefully timed pounce. Adi, of course, fell on Krish, as the doctor let out a desperate "Whoosh!" (He had lost faith in the power of "Whish!" by now).

"Maruti! You naughty boy!" came an imperious call. They turned round to see an

elderly lady at the gate. A chauffeur-driven black car stood behind her.

"Maruti!" she frowned again.

They turned to see Maruti look guilty—yes, guilty—and ashamed. Apparently he couldn't stand the severity of the old lady's glance. He quickly covered both his eyes with his hands.

"See no evil," muttered the doctor as Krish chuckled.

Maruti spread his fingers and peeped through them. Hastily, he covered his eyes again.

"I'm sorry he has taken the stethoscope," the elderly lady apologized. "He just loves stethoscopes. He's always trying to grab my doctor's stethoscope, too!"

"Oh, so he has seen a doctor at work then!" exclaimed Mr. Raman, as it became obvious that Maruti was a pet. "That explains how he was able to use it and imitate a doctor."

"But how did he ride my cycle?" asked Krish plaintively.

"No? He didn't ride your cycle, too, did he?" asked the lady in horror. "He is always trying to ride the gardener's cycle. I've told him to keep it locked. Oh dear! Now I have

one more problem. NAUGHTY!" she chided Maruti sternly.

Maruti took shelter behind his hands once again.

"Give the stethoscope back!" commanded the lady.

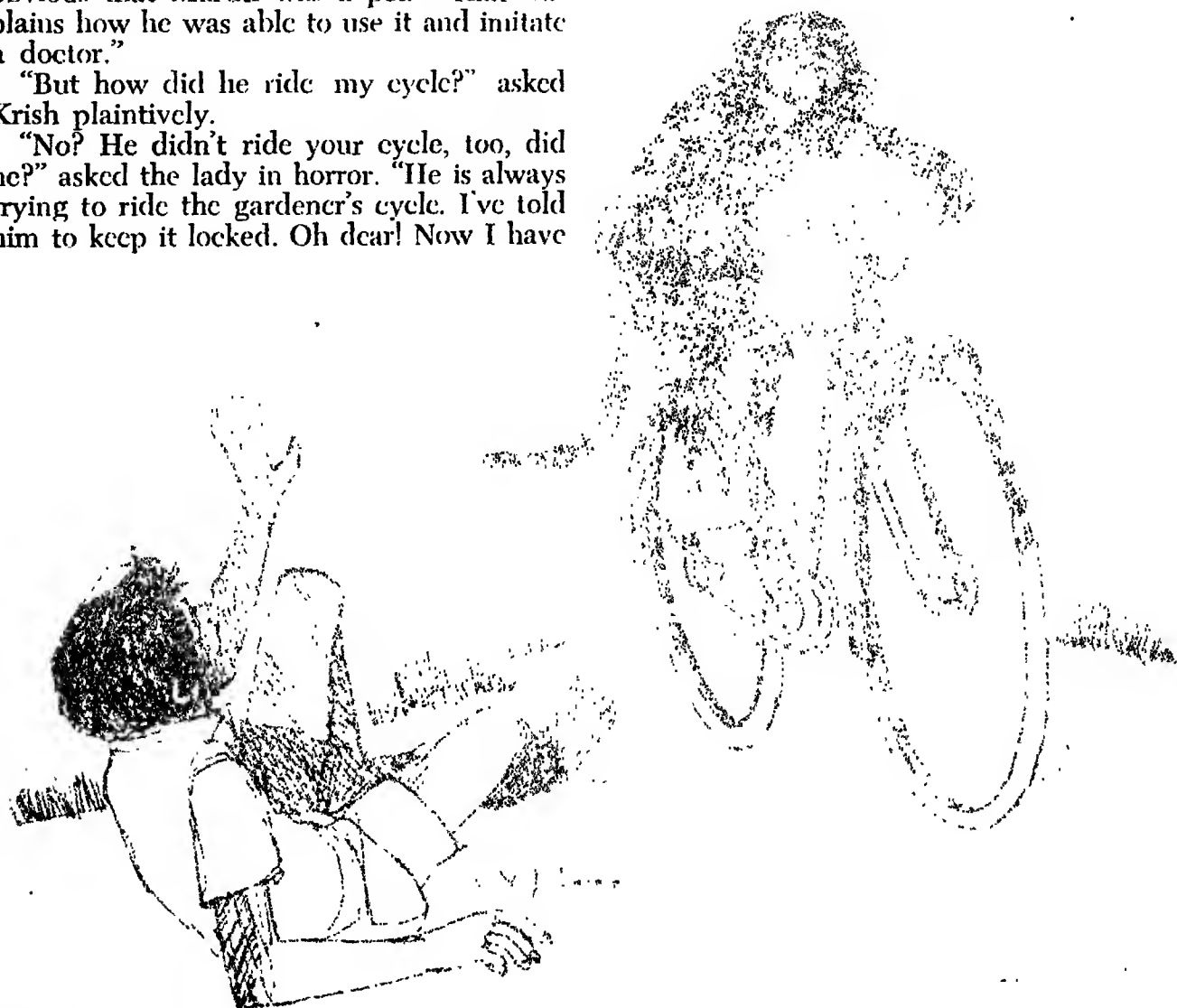
Maruti's face took on a rather stubborn expression.

"Look! I'll give you a lollipop!"

The old lady opened her handbag and fished out a yellow lollipop which she held invitingly. Maruti weakened.

"Look! It's got a whistle too!"

It was too much for Maruti to resist anymore. He flung the stethoscope with scant respect. Krish managed to catch it before it hit the ground. Maruti was already holding out his left hand.



"Naughty! Naughty! Which hand?" cooed the old lady.

Maruti looked sheepish, held out his right hand and got the lollipop. He scampered to the compound wall where he sat tearing the wrapper with intent care.

"I'm so sorry about everything. He has never been so naughty before!" apologized the old lady graciously and went to the car. The chauffeur held the door open.

"Maruti!" she called. Maruti jumped down and followed her into the car. The chauffeur shut the door respectfully after him and started the engine. Maruti licked the lollipop, holding it with one hand and waved merrily to them with the other.

"Ta! ta!" Adi responded exuberantly. Mr. Raman's father went back to his bed after a last chuckle.

"Naughty boy!" muttered the doctor in disgust.

"That old lady is a bit eccentric, lives in that big yellow bungalow," Mr. Raman pointed vaguely. "She has some animals,

but I didn't know that a monkey was one of them!"

"She has three small white dogs that keep yapping their heads off!" Adi offered.

Krish remembered the house. "Oh! I know it," he nodded.

"Well, I'll be off!" said Dr. Purushottam, very professional now. "You remember how to give the medicines?"

"Come," he called Krish. "I'll take you up to the main road and then take a taxi from there!"

Krish pointed the yellow house to the doctor on the way back and sure enough, they saw Maruti, hard at work on his yellow lollipop.

"I'll never forget this day!" exclaimed Dr. Purushottam, as he almost ran into a lamp-post on the road. "What an adventure!"

"Neither will I," agreed Krish. He thought to himself as they bumped along, 'But I had two adventures, Dr. Purushottam. One was with you and another with Dr. Maruti!'

*Subhadra Krishnamurthy*

## DID YOU KNOW . . . .

1. That the giraffe is a dumb animal?
2. That the sloth spends most of its life hanging up-side down?
3. That the goat has only the lower set of teeth?
4. That the chimpanzee is rated next to man in intelligence?
5. That the opossum, like the kangaroo, carries its young in a skin pouch?
6. That the mare has only 36 teeth while the horse has 40?
7. That 87 per cent of cow's milk is water?
8. That the lizard drops its tail when touched?
9. That the cow has only two toes on each foot?
10. That the cat can see in semi-darkness and not in the dark?
11. That the blue whale is the largest animal. It is known to reach a length of 111 ft (35 m) and weighs approximately 100 tons?
12. That the whale can stay in water for about 20 minutes and then it has to come up to breathe?
13. That the humming bird can fly backwards?
14. That the stork is a voiceless bird?
15. That the eagle can look directly at the sun?

*(Compiled by Rachna Sud)*

# THE BRAVE HARE

ONCE upon a time, there lived in a jungle a small hare who was named Long-tail. He obviously acquired that name because his tail was long. But besides having a long tail, the hare had another characteristic—that of being the greatest coward in that forest! Poor Long-tail was born a coward. The slightest sound would send a shiver down his spine. The snapping of a twig or the murmur of the wind would make his heart flutter.



Every day was a day of terror for poor Long-tail. It remained thus for weeks and months and years, and his parents had given him up as a useless coward. Then, one fine day, Long-tail himself decided to shed this habit and become brave like his comrades.

"I am not afraid of anything!" he shouted out loud and clear, for everyone to hear. All the hares, young and old, came running to hear Long-tail. They could hardly believe their ears.

"But aren't you afraid of the big bad wolf?" they asked him.

"No, not even the bear, nor the tiger," boasted Long-tail.

The little hares giggled when they heard him showing off. They found him very funny and they bounced around in excitement. The older hares smiled to themselves, for they knew what it was to escape the jaws of the wolf. Hadn't they experienced it many a time?

But Long-tail was so excited with his new found bravery that he announced boldly, "If the wolf came near me, I would eat him up myself!" Some of the hares laughed at his foolishness, others remained silent.

The wolf was just lurking nearby and he happened to hear the bold statement made by one of the hares. Peeping through the bushes, he saw a very gay scene with many hares frolicking in the open. He was very hungry after an unsuccessful day of hunting. His anger flared up when he heard one of them boasting, and he was bent on getting at least one hare as his prey. He drew closer to the bunch of hares and tried to identify the one who had dared to make such a rash statement.

'I'll make you eat your own words, my boy,' he said as he smacked his lips.

The hares had not seen the wolf so close to them as Long-tail was still showing off his newly acquired bravery. In one jump he climbed on to the stump of a tree and shouted, "Now watch me, my friends. I will show you a fantastic trick that will make you . . ." The words froze in his mouth, for he had spotted the wolf looking straight at him and a look that spelt anger.

And then something terrific happened. Long-tail's senses had left him when he spotted the wolf. He leapt high in the air out of sheer fear and landed straight on the wolf's head, rolled off his back, and with another somersault in the air, ran as fast as he could, deep into the woods, away from the ferocious glare of the wolf.

Long-tail kept running till he could run

no more, not once did he turn back to see the wolf, whom, he thought, was chasing him. He kept imagining that any minute his sharp teeth would come gnashing down on him.

But the wolf was running exactly in the opposite direction. When Long-tail had fallen bang on his head, he felt a gun-shot had whizzed over him, and without bothering even about the other hares, one of whom he could easily have caught, he ran fast.

All the other hares took a long time to recover from their shock. They had hidden wherever they could find a place—some behind bushes in hollow trunks and others straight into their burrows. When they were hungry, the braver hares peeped out of their holes and stepped out. The smaller ones followed suit.

"Long-tail really chased the wolf away," said one old wise hare.

"Yes, but for him, we wouldn't have been alive just now," said another.

"But where is Long-tail?" squeaked another. And they all started looking for him. After a very long search, they found him in a hole, shuddering with fear.

"Bravo, Long-tail! You are a hero," they all shouted. "You actually chased the wolf away. Thank you so much! All the time we were thinking that you were boasting. But you actually are brave," they said.

Long-tail listened to them aghast. Then he collected his wits, crawled out of the hole, shrugged and murmured, "Boasting, indeed! What cowards I have as my kinsmen!"

And from that day onwards, Long-tail imagined himself to be a brave little hare.

*(A Russian Fairy Tale Retold by Pinkie)*



FROM CHINESE MYTHOLOGY

# THE GODS OF THE SOIL

**T**HERE is an interesting and amusing Chinese tale, regarding the two gods of the soil. One god lived on the Northern Mountain, and one on the Southern. Their shrines were in remote areas where people were poor and scarce, consequently the offerings at their respective temples were few, and the gods close to starvation.

One day, a boy passed by the shrine of the Southern Mountain deity, who stretched out his hand to touch the boy's body. When the lad reached home, he developed a high fever. His family gave him all sorts of medicines, but in vain. Then, a voice spoke from the boy's body telling him that the illness had been caused by a mountain spirit, and that he, the god of the Southern Mountain, would cure him. He instructed the family to go to his shrine, cut off a piece of camphor from the tree in front, make a liquid and give it to the sick lad. The family did so, and the boy recovered. The grateful family then sent food and other offerings to



the god. Delighted that his ruse had worked, the god sent his servant to invite the deity of the Northern Mountain to share the feast.

His guest was suitably impressed, and asked how he had obtained the magnificent repast. The Southern Mountain god explained his strategy, and the Northern Mountain god decided to try out the same.

As luck would have it, the very next day a cowherd passed his temple, so he reached out his hand and touched the boy. The boy reached home, and immediately fell ill. The god then entered his body, and issued the same instructions to the stricken family. The father of the boy, hurried to the shrine but, alas, there was no camphor tree. The god's idol, however, was made of camphor, but the man did not wish to dam-

age the image. So lifting a corner of the god's robe, he cut off a piece of camphor from the back. He gave his son the prescribed amount, and the boy got well.

But, as they were a poor family, it never occurred to them to offer anything in thanksgiving. All day the god waited in vain. Finally, hungry and cross, especially as his friend, the Southern Mountain god, had achieved success, he painfully made his way to his friend. The latter was surprised to see him and asked him the reason for his visit. The god told his story, and the Southern Mountain god laughed and laughed. He teased his friend for not recollecting that his shrine had no camphor tree, and said that he had only himself to blame for his failure.

*Geeta Choudhry*

## BOOK REVIEW

### **RAMAN THE JESTER**

by Kamala Laxman

India Book House

Rs. 25

**I** WONDER how many of you haven't heard stories of Tenali Raman, the famous court jester of Krishnadeva Raya. Although written some hundreds of years ago, they are the kind of anecdotes one loves to hear over and over again. Perhaps it may be because there is a certain amount of movement, action, and suspense in them.

'Raman the Jester' is a collection of four such stories, delightfully told as they are, by Kamala Laxman. The first two, 'Tenali Raman and the Well-digger' and 'Raman and the Artist', have an interesting theme and unfold age-old morals without being too preachy. The other two, 'Raman and the Guest' and 'Raman and the Hunters', are quite amusing and would appeal to any child who reads them.

The bright, colourful pictures by R.K. Laxman are excellent. In fact, the illustrations themselves tell you the story, even before you've read the text! But all things said

and done, the price of the book certainly put me off, as it would anybody else. No doubt, Tenali Raman's stories are quite popular with the kids and most of the children would like to buy it, yet I feel it is too high a price to pay for a book like this! Publishers should take note and make an attempt to bring out books which are within the reach of the common man.

*N. A.*

### **THE HONEY-BEE ADVENTURE**

by Chitra Narendran

India Book House

Rs. 4.50

**W**ITH 'The Honey-Bee Adventure', Ms. Narendran treads the beaten track. She resorts to fantasy to get children interested in the interior of a hive. Unfortunately, most children who would pick up a book like this on their own to read would have already learnt from their nature study books how bees make honey, how they reproduce, build their hive, etc. . . .

The external plot, i.e., Sheila's adventure in a toy-plane and her introduction to the bees, therefore, becomes weak and trans-

parent, superimposed on a realistic background as it is. Whatever little excitement there is comes at the end of the story, and is contrived.

The choice of words leaves much to be desired. The toy-plane, the lady-bird, the bees, all seem to be either going "up and up and up", or "down and down and down". The names, in an attempt to cling to the familiar, are unimaginative; the lady-bird is 'Lady-bird,' the bee who shows Sheila around is Bizy Bee. Sheila herself has not been spared—for variety, her name has been spelt in two different ways—'Shiela' as well as 'Sheila'. Suraj Sriram's illustrations are dull and lack lustre.

Chitra Narendran's "abiding interest", the blurb says, "is to teach children their responsibilities through play methods." How 'The Honey-Bee Adventure' fits into this scheme of things becomes a matter for conjecture. But Rs. 4.50 for the book does seem steep.

V. S.

### **BOBBY**

by Vijay Tendulkar  
and

### **THE LAND OF CARDS**

by Sai Paranjpye  
India Book House  
Rs. 4.50

**B**OTH plays, meant for children, make certain serious social comments, aimed indirectly at adults. Though Vijay Tendulkar has used simple language throughout, 'Bobby' will be relevant only when read by adults.

Bobby's plight may be shared by many children, but will it improve if other children read about it? Or, when parents such as Bobby's (who has been named so because her parents wanted a boy) are made aware of the problems of a lonely child?

The text is good and there is enough humour on the surface to appeal to children, but the play calls for a lot of reading between the lines, which perhaps only a limited number of children will be able to do.

The Land of Cards is a clever idea and has a strong plot to support it, but, again,

only some children and adults will be able to grasp the purpose and meaning of the play.

It has plenty of action and laughter, and the personification of cards might well amuse children, but underlying this humorous vein is a serious and topical theme aimed at the adult world.

Jealousies, intrigue, politics, war and peace—the entire works have been brought into this play; and as though this were not enough, the author very categorically moralizes on more than one occasion, thereby leaving very little for the readers' imagination. For instance, the knave tells Nine of Hearts how "one has to take risks if one hopes to achieve something." Or, the Joker tells the knave, "Never will I belong to one party. I belong to the entire kingdom. I have no colour or creed—no senseless wars for me! I want to make people happy, to spread peace."

Some extremely adult ideas which would prejudice the child's mind have crept into the play. For instance, when the king says, "Oh! Women! Here I am trying to explain a most important matter to her, and all she thinks about is tin-makers."

It is a pity that, though the conception of both these plays is good, its rendering leaves much to be desired, as far as children are concerned.

### **TUBBO MOTAWALA**

by Uma Anand  
India Book House  
Rs. 4.50

**T**UBBO is no ordinary cat. He lives on milk, cream, chopped liver, boiled fish, and minced meat. He cannot even think of eating a live mouse. On the contrary, Tiddlewinks the mouse and Tubbo get along like a house on fire. Their adventures, related in this book, will bring a smile on anybody's face.

The character of Tubbo, the fat little naughty cat, has been portrayed well, and sooner or later every reader will fall in love with him.

The illustrations are good and children will enjoy reading this book.

N. S.

# THE TALE OF THE TEDDY



*Above : Winnie the Pooh. Facing page : Misha the Olympic mascot.*

**E**VERYONE loves toys. But which do you think is the most favourite fun-toy of them all? I'll give you just one guess. Ah! I'm sure most of you have guessed it already. It's the 'Teddy Bear'!

Large or small, furry and cuddly, beady-eyed, button-nosed, fat little arms outstretched, these lovable little fellows—Teddy Bears—are loved by children and adults.

Most of you may not be aware of this—that the Teddy Bear is about seventy-six years old today. **That old?** . . . some of you may ask a little incredulously. **Yes!** And what's more, he must be the best-loved of all toys in the world. Ever since the first Teddy Bear of them all arrived on the scene.

Teddy Bears have a fascinating family history. Where do you think it all started?

To begin with, the Teddy Bear is named after a President of the United States. The story goes that in the year 1902, President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt, while out on a hunting trip, refused to shoot a little brown bear that had evoked his sympathy. The incident was promptly reported in newspapers in the form of a cartoon featuring 'Teddy' with his bear.

A resourceful toy-maker seized upon the idea of a 'Teddy's Bear' and set to producing the first of these soft cuddly toys. They proved to be an instant success and their sales swept America, making the toy manufacturer a millionaire overnight. The Teddy Bears had come to stay!

Since then, there has been no looking back. Teddies have now conquered the world. They come in various kinds and all sizes.

Some are large—as large as life, others are medium-size, and can be carried around or even taken to bed. Some Teddies are as small as five or six inches, the size of your hand, some even as tiny as two inches, fitting snugly in your pocket!

For most people, a Teddy Bear means 'comfort' and 'love' and 'security'. When your parents are annoyed with you for something naughty you did, or when your friends toss their heads, stick their noses in the air and tell you that they never, never want to play with you again, your Teddy sits there on your bed, or on your table or shelf, watching you sympathetically. You run to him and hold him close and fall asleep with him nestling close to you and everything seems all right again! Next morning the sun shines brighter, your parents are smiling and your best friend in the group comes over to say 'Come on, let's play' . . . Later on, in the day, you run to Teddy and whisper impulsively—"Thank you, dear Teddy. . . ."

Teddies all over the world have accompanied their owners into a hundred and one strange new situations where their owners might have felt nervous or scared. But with their own beloved Teddy sitting in the crook of their arm or inside a bag or in a suitcase, the world seems a brighter place.

Prince Charles of England is reported to have with him still a Teddy Bear which he took with him to his first boarding-school. There are other well-known personalities who have cherished their Teddy Bears long



after they have grown up. Actress Samantha Eggar took her Teddy to her wedding. The Teddy occupied the pride of place in the front pews along with other distinguished guests!

Perhaps the most famous of all Toy Bears is Winnie the Pooh. This plump beady-eyed fellow has a perpetually astonished expression on his face. He lives with his other stuffed toy-animal friends—Piglet, Eeyore, the sad-looking donkey, Kanga-Roo and the rest. They all belong to little Christopher Robin who was a little boy living on a farm in Sussex, England in the '20s.

Christopher's mother had bought the original Winnie the Pooh at Harrod's in London, for her son's first birthday. It was Christopher's father, A.A. Milne, who wrote stories for him about Winnie the Pooh. But the person who really made Pooh famous was a man called Ernest 'Kip' Shepard. He created the rotund lovable characters of Pooh and

his friends in cartoon-form from the real set of toys in Christopher Robin's nursery.

The 'Pooh' series were sold in millions in the form of books—*When We Were Very Young*, *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *Now We Are Six* and *The House at Pooh Corner*. Later on, Walt Disney, the king of animated cartoon-makers, presented Pooh on film. Cartoon-strips began to appear in Sunday editions of newspapers and were received by an adoring public.

Now, after more than fifty years, ever so many people the world over still love to read about Pooh and his adventures (or his misadventures) in his favourite haunts—Wol's Tree, Eeyore's Gloomy Place, and the Place Where The Woozle Wasn't.

Like Winnie-the-Pooh, Teddies invariably end up having nonsense-names like Wonky-Poo or Mr. Woppit and at times they even bear impossibly distinguished names like Sir Archibald Ormsby Gore!

Another bear who has become a popular figure in B.B.C. Television shows is called 'Paddington Bear'. A rather unusual name, don't you think? Well, this Bear was given his name by author Michael Bond. Bond decided to write a story about a Teddy who was found at London's Paddington Station, wearing a label around his neck which read 'Please look after this Bear. Thank you.' That's how Paddington Bear got his name. The TV series were a great success in England and several other places.

And now, the latest in the long line of Teddy Bears, we have 'Misha'. Designed by Victor Chizhikov, 'Misha' is a beaming chubby, brown bear. He is the cuddly mascot for the 1980 World Olympics to be held in Moscow.

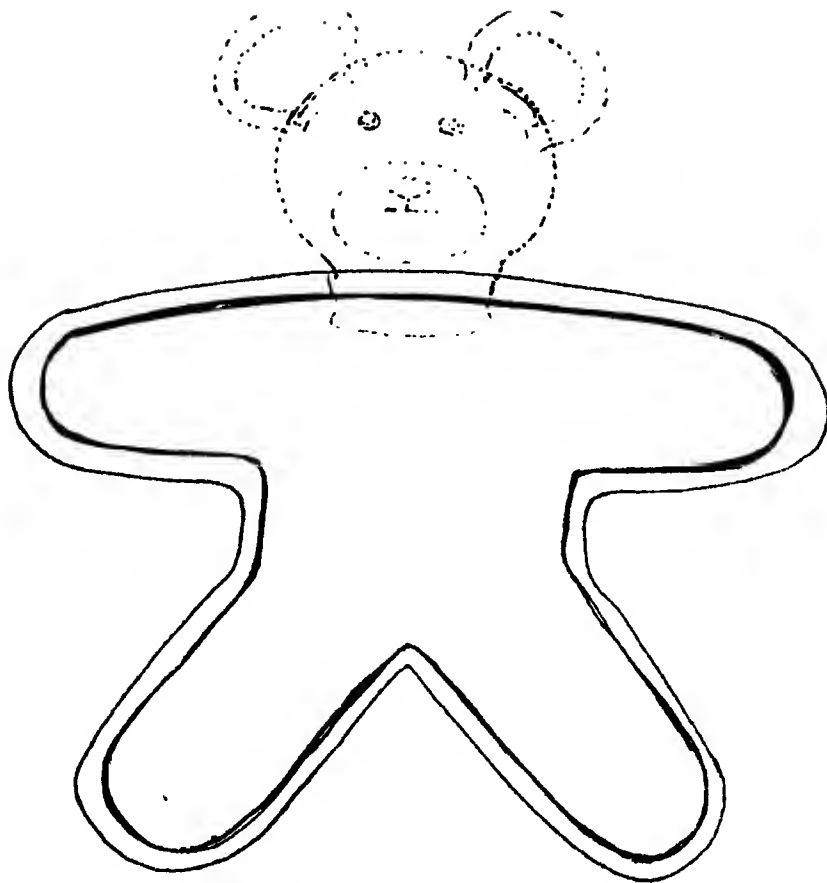
Long live Teddy Bears!

## MAKE YOUR OWN TEDDY

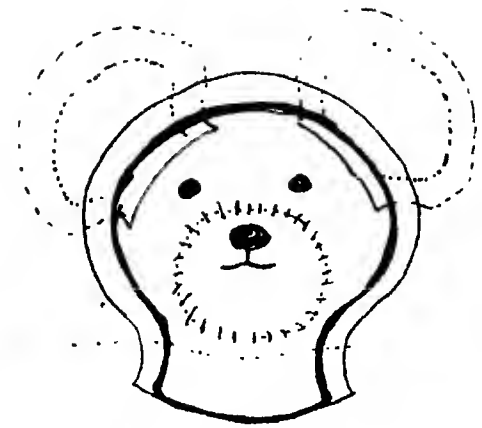
### Materials

1 metre towelling cloth or some soft felt (colour beige). One small scrap darker-coloured cloth for Teddy's snout.

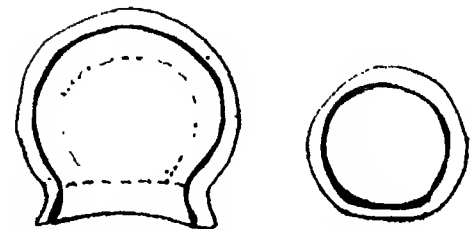
Beige-coloured thread, needles, scissors; Buttons or beads for eyes and black-thread; cotton wool, rags for stuffing.



*Body : Cut two (front and back)*



*Head : Cut two (front and back)*



*Ears : Cut two X two 'front and back'—four in all. Snout : Cut one in slightly darker shade.*

### Method

Trace out patterns on thick card-paper and cut. Place patterns over cloth and cut the pieces as required, leaving a seam allowance of 1-2 mm. First make Teddy's ears: stitch along the dark line, joining the front and back of each ear. Turn inside out and stuff with a thin layer of cotton-wool stitch all around leaving 1 mm to keep cotton in place. Join both ears to the front head-piece, as shown, then join both fronts as shown, then join both front and back head-pieces together. Stuff with cotton wool or old soft rags. Place the snout-pieces on the face and outline lightly with a pencil. Now cut out a thin layer of cotton wool to that shape and place it on the 'face' and the 'snout' over the cotton-wool. Hold in place and stitch using top-stitches. These will be visible, so try to be very neat. Your Teddy will now have a raised snout.

Now stitch up the seams of Teddy's 'body', leaving only about an inch open at

the top where the neck would be. Now stuff as before. When Teddy's body is stuffed to the full, place the head in place so that part of the lower neck disappears into the body. Stitch the head to the body, using top-stitching again.

### The Finishing Touches

Your Teddy isn't Teddy without his inquiring beady eyes and his up-turned nose. So give him everything. If you have large black beads or rounded buttons, stitch those on as his eyes. Or you can do it with black thread, by making 'french knots' or by 'filling in'. Give him a nose with another black button or some black thread. Or if you're feeling lazy, you can just paint it on with poster colours or with a black felt-pen.

And there's your very own Teddy, fat and cheerful, all yours!

*Padmini Rao*

# LAUGH WITH US!

"Sonny, did you get my suit from the tailor?"

"No, Papa, he wouldn't give it to me without paying the money."

"Didn't you tell him what I told you, that you're too young to carry money?"

"Yes, Papa, but he said he would keep the suit till I got bigger."

★

Teacher: Who is the laziest member of your class, Jim?

Jim: I don't know, sir.

Teacher: But I think you should know. Anyway, I'll provide a clue. When all the others are doing hard work, studying their books and writing their lessons, who sits idly in his seat and watches the rest, instead of working himself?

Jim: The teacher.

*Sanjay Kwatra (11)*

Once a student wrote to his father from his hostel: "Dear Father, No mon, no fun, your son."

His father replied: "Dear son, too bad, so sad, your Dad."

*Anupama Dwivedi (11)*

Mother: Rajesh, have you passed in all subjects?

Rajesh: No, Mummy, I passed only in one subject.

Mother: Why?

Rajesh: God has not given me five heads to pass in the other five subjects.

*Shashikant Shetty (12)*

Teacher: Ram, what was the important event that occurred in 1864?

Ram: Miss, how do I know? I was not even born at that time.

★

Father: Ganesh, what is the difference between an autobiography and a biography?

Ganesh: An autobiography is the story of autorickshaws and biography is the study of biology and geography.

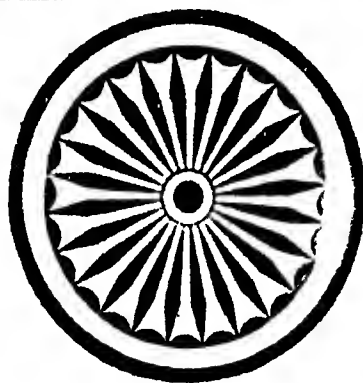
*Taru Bakshi*



An autobiographical feature on the famous magician, Roy the Mystic, and the concluding part of "Marooned off a Metcoroid" will appear in the next issue.

— Editor





## **26th JANUARY**

**A Sacred Anniversary—Thrice Blessed.**

This Day, 49 years ago,  
we proclaimed our resolve to  
achieve Purna Swaraj.

—This day, in 1950, we proclaimed ourselves  
a Republic and gave ourselves a Constitution  
enshrining the ideals of Justice, Liberty,  
Equality and Fraternity.

—Around this day, two years ago, we began  
our journey back to the democratic processes  
guaranteed by the Constitution.

—To mark the Anniversary—

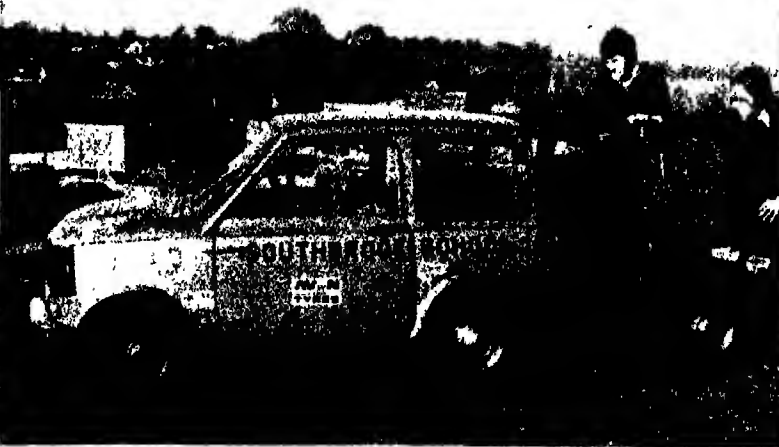
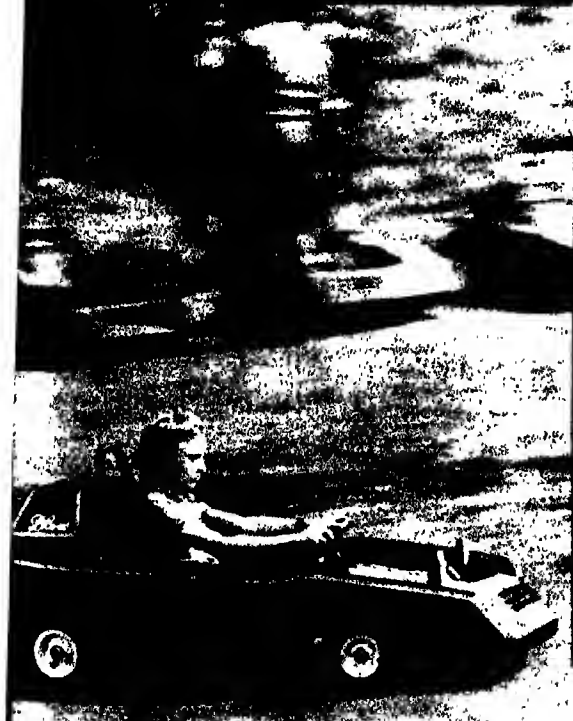
**Let us give thanks for the restoration  
of our liberties**

**Let us strive to fulfil the dreams of those  
who gave their lives in the  
cause of freedom and equality.**

**Let us rededicate ourselves to the early  
achievement of social, economic and  
political justice.**

davp-78/394

**PROFESSION :** About 350 out of over 4,000 pupils of Moscow's Krasnogvardeyski study-end-work centre have opted for the driver's profession. Besides practice driving and automobile engineering, they learn traffic regulations with simulated road situations on a model.



**HOBBY :** Young motoring hobbyists in Britain have been attracted by the 'Mirage'—a streamlined, glass-fibre bodied go-cart (at left). It can attain a top speed of 40 km per hour. The students of a Daventry school recently built a revolutionary 'add-e-car' (above) as a part of the 'Buildacer Competition', for schools. Called 'a city car of the future', it can have either a plug in boot section with two extra wheels or a caravan section that clips on the back.

(Courtesy : USSR Information Dept.  
and British Information Service)

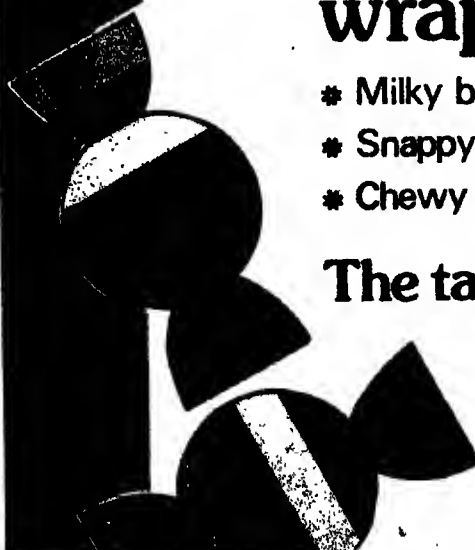


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- \* Milky bonbons
- \* Snappy fruit drops
- \* Chewy toffees

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**Ravalgaon**



**Sweets and toffees**

# CHILDREN'S World

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Cover: "Spring" by Marlanna Kardos (8) Hungary

● Children's World 1979

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# A Touch of The Sun

**'H**E's had a touch of the sun', one often hears people say. And quite appropriate, too, that such a phrase should have been coined, for, if any of you have been in Delhi on a December afternoon, you would have felt the warmth of the brilliant sunshine on your back, giving you that deliciously delirious feeling; the languor upon your hearts, making you just that little bit more musical; bringing slumber to your eyes, and making you forget all your toils and troubles.

It's incredible, the effect a bright sun



can have on people. For those who see it rarely, it brings a ray of hope, a reason to smile, to go out and generally go berserk.

To others, it means stretching out in the lawn with a good book, a tall cool drink, and soaking in as much of the hot sun as possible.

To some of us sporty ones in Delhi, a sunny day in winter could only mean listening to the cricket commentary and eating peanuts. Though, if someone were to ask one of these 'cricket fans' what the score is, he would probably turn round and say—"With the sun falling on your face, who wants to know the score anyway!"

To the meticulous ones amongst us, the sun helps clear the atmosphere—and draw out the dust-laden corners of cupboards, shelves, floors, etc. in the house.

But it is the more imaginative ones that I want to talk about. I bet none of you thought of blowing bubbles on a sunny day. Well, if you have, you'll know what I mean about being imaginative. . . . .!

It was a Sunday morning, and a sunny one too, when I received a telephone call from Vivek. "Come over fast and bring Binku and Rakesh, too. I've got something fantastic to show you," he said.

"But. . . . ."

"No but but, you've got to come."

And I couldn't get another word in, because Rakesh had disconnected the line.

Quickly, we got into our jeans and shirts, and before our parents knew what was happening we were off, saying vague things like, "We'll be back, when we're back!" When we arrived at Vivek's place, he came out all flushed and excited.

"Hi! Come, let me show you what I've got," he said, as he led us to the garden at the back. "A funny old man came around selling this liquid and plastic tubes to blow bubbles with—for only three rupees. Isn't that great?"

"Bubbles—oh boy! I've been wanting to do that for a long time. Can I try first."

"You would, wouldn't you," said my brother, Rakesh, as he scowled at me.

But when he saw a string of bubbles emerge—each a more perfect sphere than the other, his expression changed visibly.

"Wow!" chorused he, Vivek and Binku, as their eyes followed the fascinating, fragile bubbles floating in the air. Some very tiny ones burst almost instantly, but as I got the hang of blowing gently into the tube, I drew bigger and bigger and bigger bubbles that lingered in the still morning air, almost as languid as the sun itself. Then, gradually, they would fade away, bringing an "Oh! How sad" on everyone's lips.

And then came Rakesh's turn. Being a physics student, he was determined to find new ways of blowing better and bigger bubbles. He turned the pipe round, twisted the metal ring in front of it much to everybody's discontent and, through all his experiments, managed to make some of the most fascinating bubbles, each one bigger than the other.

Binku was in a trance, as she watched the bubbles catch all the colours around them—the green of the grass, the blue of the sky, the purple of her shirt and, of course, the golden of the sun. They almost appeared like precious gems floating in the sky—winking at the passers-by—going, going, gone forever.

But there were more, and these were tiny ones that came and sat on Binku's hair, softly and silently, bathing her in a crimson hue. For a few seconds, she even felt like a queen!

"Wish I could hold these bubbles," said Vivek, as he put out his hands towards them. There was something very exciting about wanting to hold these perfectly translucent spheres that parked themselves anywhere and everywhere. For a long time he chased them, sometimes raising his hands and sometimes bending down, even though he knew it was in vain.

Then we decided to blow bubbles from four directions, and soon there was a cluster right above our heads. It moved down very gently, swaying with the breeze and winking at us as if to say—"Come on dum dums, have some fun." Perhaps it was a touch of our imagination or maybe just a touch of the sun. For only three rupees, we had bought ourselves a world of joy.

*Navkala Singh*

# “GOOD OLD BROWNIE!”

“THIS is my dog. . . . His name is Rover . . . . I like to play with Rover. . . . Rover likes to play with. . . . Mummy, will you get me a dog, please?” Rohit asked, suddenly looking up from the book he was reading.

“What happened?” Mummy was rather surprised. “You were reading very well. Carry on.”

“Please, Mummy, all my friends have a dog. I don’t.”

“Okay, let Papa come and we shall ask him,” said Mummy consolingly. “And now, where were we? Yes, I like to play with Rover. Now read on—Rover likes to play. . . . .”

But Rohit was not in the least interested. He was thinking of his own dog with long ears and a shiny, silky coat.

“You know, Mummy, Tara’s had pups. Teacher told me today. Can I ask Teacher to give me one of Tara’s pups? Say yes, Mummy, p-l-e-a-s-e,” begged Rohit.

Mummy could not help but smile. She knew how Rohit loved dogs. And Tara was his pet. She belonged to his teacher who stayed in the school compound. Every day, during lunch time, Rohit would go with his

teacher to her house and play with Tara.

“Okay, darling,” Mummy said. “But we must ask Papa first. Now hurry up and finish your homework, so that we can have a long chat with Papa when he comes.” Mummy was trying to change the subject. But Rohit was adamant. He must have a dog! Then he quickly finished his sums and the two pages of writing and sat near the window waiting for Papa. After what seemed like ages, Rohit heard the familiar sound of a car.

“Papa’s come, Papa’s come!” he shouted, jumping up and down and clapping his hands with joy. Then pulling his mother along, Rohit rushed outside to greet his father.

“Papa, Tara’s got pups. Mummy says I can keep one if only you agree. Papa, you’ll agree, no? Say yes, please!”

“Wait, let me get inside first,” answered his father. “Yes, now tell me.” So Rohit told him all about Tara and how he had always wanted a dog and how Mummy had agreed to keep Tara’s pup, “. . . if only you agree,” finished Rohit.

Papa couldn’t say anything but “Yes”. Rohit was thrilled. He ran to his friend’s house and told him all about it. Then he went and told Raju’s grandfather, too, and Mickey’s mother, and Mohiti’s uncle.

That night he was restless. He had so many things on his mind. ‘Will teacher agree to part with the puppy? If she does, will





the puppy like to stay with me? What will I name him? Will my dog have a black silky coat and long ears, or will he have a golden brown one?

Early next morning, Rohit quickly got ready for school, gulped down his milk, and rushed out to catch the school bus. On reaching school, he ran straight to the staff-room and asked his teacher. "Teacher, Teacher, will you give me Tara's baby, please?"

The teacher was rather taken aback. "Come here, child. Now tell me. You want Tara's baby? Okay. But they are too small. You'll have to wait for a week or so. But I promise, I'll give you one next Friday. Right?"

And I shall choose the best one for you." Then holding his hand, she took him for the morning assembly.

Rohit's joy knew no bounds. Throughout the week, he kept pestering his teacher, by asking her all sorts of questions. "How big is my dog now? Have you told him I'll be taking him? Is he brown in colour, and does he have long ears like Tara?" and so on till the teacher finally said one Friday afternoon: "Yes, Rohit, the little puppy is big enough to stay with you now. Come and take it from me before going home today."

So when school was over, Rohit rushed to his teacher and asked for the puppy. And sure enough, he was just as he had imagined! A chubby little, brown coloured thing with long ears. He carefully picked him up and hugged him. "Hello, Brownie," he said. "You like your name, don't you?" Then he tucked him inside his coat and dashed out to catch the school bus back home.

Munimy and Papa were very happy to

meet 'Brownie', and Raju's grandfather marvelled at the name. "A perfect name for a perfect dog," he said. Rohit was proud of himself. Mummy gave him an old shoe box in which he made Brownie's bed. Then he put a little bit of milk in a saucer for Brownie, but poor Brownie didn't know how to drink from it. Then Mummy brought out an old feeding bottle and fed him. After the milk, Brownie's little tummy bloated and he couldn't even walk. He took a few steps and then putting his head on Rohit's slippers, he went off to sleep. Rohit just sat beside him. Everyday after that, Rohit played with Brownie for hours together, and Mummy was only too happy. He didn't get into mischief, now!

Days passed and then came Brownie's first birthday! Rohit, Mohiti, Raju, and Mickey were all excited. They must give Brownie a surprise! So that morning, in school, the four friends got together and decided to celebrate his birthday.

"Mummy makes lovely cakes," said Rohit. "I'm sure she'll bake me one."

"I'll get boiled keema and rice. Brownie will love it," said Mohiti.

"Should I get sandwiches?" said Mickey.

"No, Mohiti's getting rice," said Rohit. "so why don't you get cashewnuts, instead? I know Papa says we mustn't give him cashewnuts, but he loves them. And above all, it's his birthday!" finished Rohit. And Raju said he would take charge of the decorations.

So that evening, the friends sat down to a very different party. Just the four of them and a dog! No presents, no games, and also not the usual eats. Boiled rice and keema, cashewnuts and cake. What a combination! And good old Brownie beat them all, with a big green bow tied round his neck. Rohit helped him cut the cake, while everybody sang, 'Happy Birthday!'

The party was a great success. They enjoyed themselves thoroughly. They played hide-and-seek, dark-room, and all kinds of games they could think of, and Brownie joined them in the fun, too. They were completely exhausted when they decided to break up the party. Reluctantly, each one said 'Bye-Bye' and went home.

Brownie was sad. Somehow he didn't like

to say 'good-bye'. So, he quietly slipped under Rohit's bed and closed his eyes. Rohit, in the meanwhile, washed and got ready for bed. Just then he remembered, he was to take an exam the next day. 'Oh, what am I to do now?' he thought. But it was too late. He went straight to bed and before he knew it, he was fast asleep.

When Rohit woke up the next morning, he was worried. He didn't know a thing. Quietly he got ready and went to school.

The bell rang, and Mrs. Sengupta, the English teacher, walked into the class. She looked at the children and said, "Please close your books now and put them away. Take out your papers and pencils and write ten lines on any one of the following topics: a) My Neighbours, b) A Cricket Match, or c) My Best Friend.

Rohit's heart sank. He couldn't write on any of them. He didn't know his neighbours, because they had just moved in. Cricket he just wasn't fond of. And friends... what could he write on? Just then the teacher called out, "Fifteen minutes more."

Rohit's paper was blank. Everyone in his class was writing furiously. The teacher was looking at him. Bravely he picked up his pencil and began to write.

"Time's up, children," said the teacher, just when Rohit had put down his pencil. He handed in his paper and then sat back looking worried. 'Teacher will surely be annoyed with me,' he thought. 'What if she tells the Principal? I may even get a beating.'

After sometime, he heard his name being called out. "Rohit," the teacher said sternly, "come here."

He burst into tears, "Please don't beat me. I won't do it again. I am very sorry," he said in between sobs.

"Why are you crying, Rohit? I won't beat you," laughed the teacher. "I had asked you to write an essay, and this is what you've turned in." Then she held up his paper for the rest of the class to see. Staring at the children was a life-size drawing of Brownie with just one sentence written under it.

'Good Old Brownie is my best Friend, indeed!'

*Navin Anand*



# The Greatest Lion of All

**B**ABBAR was a little lion. A lion of the 'babbar sher' variety. He had a huge head with an orange beard, and flaming red hair, curling all round his face. And Babbar had a thick long tail, four legs, and paws with claws. He had bright blue eyes and a shiny black nose and a yellow coat tinged with green. He had sharp white teeth that gleamed in the night. And Babbar could

roar a pretty mighty roar, but not in the night, because then Vikram was fast asleep.

Vikram was a strong 'little' boy in Class III of a big and new school. And Babbar was his own little drawing on page 5 of his drawing book. For this drawing, Vikram's drawing teacher, Miss Necta, had given him 7/10 and a 'Very Good'. And for days Vikram thought he was the greatest artist, because he had drawn such a perfect lion. And for days Babbar was happy because he thought he was the greatest lion.

But one day, Vikram II (that is Vikram Rana), also in Class III of the big new school, told Vikram I: "That's no lion. I've seen a real lion in a real forest. And no 'babbar





sher' looks like that." And the whole class sang during break-time:

"Vikram doesn't know what a lion is.

He thinks it is that drawing of his."

And Vikram I would take his drawing book and sit in a corner of the playfield and feel sad. But soon the boys would find him and then the girls would come, too, and they'd sing that song again.

Vikram had to listen to that silly song for four days. For four days he went home with a long face. And at home, when his baby sister Vaishali asked: "Why Dada sad?" he'd just mutter: "Shut up." And when Vaishali said, "Dada, show pretty Babbar," he'd shout back, "Babbar is an ugly fellow—and he's no lion." And then Vaishali would feel sad, too, because Dada had been mean and she thought Babbar was the nicest lion.

So she waited till Dada was asleep and removed that page from his drawing book, and hid it under the mattress of her bed. And, in the morning, Vikram took a deep breath and trudged to school with a heavy heart, because it was Thursday. And Thursday meant another drawing period, and a drawing period meant all those kids would open his book and then they'd see Babbar and off they'd go again: "Vikram doesn't know..."

In went Vikram, and sat at his desk and waited for the attack which never came. So he opened his notebook and stared at the blank page where Babbar had been. Then he looked this way and that, wondering if anyone had seen his startled expression. Then he bent his head low, and turned the pages just to make sure Babbar was not somewhere in between. But it was of no use, Babbar was nowhere to be seen. So Vikram spread his drawing book on the desk, opened it wide, wet his brush, and confidently painted a village scene. But he was puzzled, and he was hurt. Where had Babbar gone? Had the boys hurt the little lion's feelings? But Babbar knew he loved him; he couldn't possibly have gone off like that. Besides, he had also got 7/10 and a 'Very Good' for it. So what, if his classmates thought a lion didn't look like Babbar? At least he liked him. And the day passed in school with Vikram wondering what had happened to

his precious Babbar.

And in the afternoon, when he got home, everything was quiet. He thought Vaishali was having her afternoon nap, so he ate his lunch in silence. But he was sure all was not as it should be. There was a mystery somewhere, and even his mother seemed to smile mysteriously. Anyway he'd find out soon enough. So, after he had finished the last spoon of 'dahi' and the last bit of the 'aloo paratha' on his plate, he tiptoed to his room. The door was closed, so he turned the handle softly—but it flew open—being pulled from the inside. "Caught you!" shouted two voices, and for the next five minutes there was utter confusion. Vikram recognised Vijimasi's voice. So he shouted, "Vijimasi, when did you come?"

Vaishali said, "Dada no know Vijimasi come," and clapped her hands. And Vijimasi said, "Hi Vikram Artist, how are you? We've got something great to show you."

"What, masi, what?" asked Vikram eagerly.

Vaishali opened her cupboard and pulled something which looked very familiar, and very different at the same time. "Dada see, Dada see," she said.

Masi said, "Do you recognise Babbar, little Vikram dada? Sorry, Vaishali stole him, but we've been so busy all morning making that little stuffed Babbar for the contest 'Children, do you know what a lion is?'"

"What kind of contest is that, Vijimasi?" asked Vikram puzzled, adding "And that painting of mine doesn't look like a real lion. All the boys and girls in my class tease me about it."

"It is a very good attempt, Viks. Besides, hasn't your teacher given you 'Very Good'? And that contest is being held by some people who want to make children aware of certain animals that are becoming more and more scarce."

Vikram was happy and relieved that Babbar was not lost; and also that Vijimasi had thought Babbar was handsome.

The next day, in school, he told Vikram II and all the other boys and girls how Vijimasi had sent a photograph of his drawing to the contest. "And you know, my Vijimasi has also made a stuffed Babbar, to use as a

symbol, for the contest. He looks very smart."

But Vikram II and all the boys and all the girls only laughed, and said, "Does he roar like a lion, too?"

Vikram shook his fist at them and said, "Wait till Babbar comes and gobbles all of you up!" But the boys and the girls only laughed more.

The days flew by and the boys and the girls and Vikram II had nearly forgotten that rhyme, too. And Vikram I didn't have to go to the corner of the playfield and sulk. Vikram I and Vikram II were great pals now, and so were all the boys and girls.

One day, when they were eating their sandwiches in the playfield during the break, they saw a green van drive up. A man got down with a big box, and under his arm was something rolled up like a calendar. The man went into the Principal's office. Vikram I and Vikram II and all the other boys collected round the van, for it was piled high with similar things. The boys tried to guess what they were. But just then the bell rang, and they had to go back to their class. They opened their English readers, but thought about that jolly man and his green van. And, ten minutes later, a peon came with a note for Miss. She read it and signed it and the peon went away. Then Miss closed her book and said, "Make a line and go to the assembly hall, the Principal has something to say to the school. Vikram I, will you please come with me to the Principal?"

Vikram I looked stunned, but couldn't possibly disobey, and Vikram II whispered, "Go it, boy." Then things happened so fast he had no time to listen to his beating heart. He was taken to the stage entrance of the assembly hall. A smiling Principal beckoned him to the stage. There sat that jolly looking man of the green van. On the table before him stood—Babbar! Just the way Vijimasi had made him, only better looking. The jolly man shook hands with Vikram and said, "Pleased to meet you, young man of the lion."

By then the whole school had filed into the hall. And Vikram II gaped when he saw Vikram I on stage—and his eyes popped out when he saw Babbar standing so straight on the table. He made the thumbs-up sign at Vikram I. Then the Principal said a few

words, and the jolly man said a lot more—mainly praising Vikram I's drawing of Babbar. Then he requested Vikram I to present all his school companions with one Babbar each—along with a poster of Babbar, too. And Vikram I did so, very proudly, with the jolly man's help, amidst laughter and loud clapping. And when Vikram II came up to receive his, he gave Vikram I a hug and whispered in his ear:

"Want to know what a lion is?"

"Take a look, it is—this!"

Then everybody in the hall chatted about Vikram I's success. The jolly man said a few more words, and they all had cokes. Before leaving in his van, the jolly man gave Vikram I one Babbar and a poster for Vaisali, one Babbar and a poster for Vijimasi, and a lot of Babbars and posters for any and all of Vikram I's friends.

So, that afternoon, a very very happy Vikram went home. He thought he was the greatest artist for having drawn such a perfect lion. And a lot of happy Babbars went home with Vikram, because they knew there they would meet the original Babbar—the greatest lion of all.

*Vaijyanthi Savant*

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# SHIRLEY MACLAINE

**"T**ALENT is nothing but sweat," says Shirley Maclaine in her memoirs, **"Don't Fall Off The Mountain"**. Acknowledged as an intelligent and talented actress, Shirley's autobiography reveals that she is also a talented writer. She wasn't a born actress or writer, though it was through sheer hard work and grit that she has attained her goals.

How did it all begin?

"I was born into a cliché-loving, middle class Virginia family," she says. Her father, Mr. Beaty, was the autocratic head of the family. He was well-educated, portly, and stern. Mrs. Beaty was a tall, thin lady, with

a romantic nature. When Shirley was three years old, her brother, Warren Beaty, arrived on the scene. The small family lived in a "plain, modest, middle class, red-brick house."

Shirley and Warren were great friends and all the accounts of her childhood have Warren featuring prominently in them. They always stayed together and she fought his battles for him. So frequently was she successful in her fights with other children that she was the only girl in the neighbourhood without a boy friend!

However, when she stopped fighting for Warren, and her formidable reputation began

A 'still' from **"The Apartment"**, an ironic comedy in which Shirley Maclaine co-stars with Jack Lemmon, and both enact two minor employees of a big insurance company (Photo courtesy : USIS)



waning, she did acquire a boy friend—Dick, aged 14, who was painting their house. But, one day, Mr. Beaty suggested to Dick that he paint another house. The neighbours across the street were commenting that it took Dick six hours to paint Shirley's bedroom windows!

Shirley and Warren were taught by their parents to respect all their possessions, as they had been acquired through hard work. She tells us that in the house they were both "exemplary citizens and our parents were proud of us." But outside their house, they rebelled against the social norms. Their mischievous antics included emptying garbage cans on other people's doorsteps, punching holes in tyres, ringing door-bells and then running away, setting off fire alarms, and crossing busy roads with fake limps!

The mischief-filled days were, however, short-lived. Shirley soon found a meaning to her life. She had been born with weak ankles, so for therapeutic reasons, her mother enrolled her in a ballet class. Shirley says, "There my imagination took anchor, my energy found a channel, and what started as therapy became my life." She fell in love with ballet right from the beginning. The hard work she put in in those early years was extraordinary for someone of her age.

After school, she would spend an hour-and-a-half travelling to the ballet class, which was run by two women. Shirley was greatly impressed by one of them, Lisa Gardener. She still recalls Lisa telling her once: "If you choose to do something, be sure to do it with your utmost." Shirley absorbed that advice so completely that even today she says she cannot enjoy anything unless she has really worked hard at it. By the age of 12, she was part of the best amateur ballet company in the USA and being the tallest in the class, she generally did the boy's roles.

Rehearsals in the ballet company would end at midnight and Shirley would rush to catch the last bus home. After the long ride, she would "stumble groggily from the bus and make my way down the quiet street to a dark and silent house." She'd eat her dinner of saltine crackers in ketchup, Tabasco, and ginger ale while standing up, and then stagger to bed, but "rarely before two o'clock." At 6.30 she would be up again,

ready for school. This exhausting schedule continued till Shirley was 17. She admits it was a lonely life, especially for a teenager. But there was a brighter side to it. "I had found a way out, a destiny I could follow."

She played all sorts of roles. Once she acted the Fairy Godmother in "Cinderella". The music had begun and just before the curtain went up, she tried a few practice poses. Suddenly, there was a snapping sound and she went down, with a piercing pain in her right ankle. She found the ankle swollen, but tightened her toe-shoe ribbon to a death-grip and stood up. The curtain went up and Shirley began to dance. She recalls: "The pain left me. I began to feel a sense of triumph that gave me strength. The dance movements came in an easy flow. It was probably my first experience in 'mind over matter' and the feeling was exquisite." Two-and-a-half hours later, right after the show was over, she called for an ambulance and "then the pain hit me. I didn't walk for four months."

While recovering from it, Shirley had a lot of time to think about what she wanted to do with her life. She decided that she had to "try my wings" and see where she landed. So at 18, she went to New York, "wide-eyed, optimistic, and certain I would crash the world of show-business overnight."

But it took some time for her to achieve her goal. She started off with auditions, road-shows, and weekly pay-cheques, staying in a tiny bug-ridden room and living on lemonade and peanut-butter sandwiches. She danced through various shows, sometimes throwing derby hats in the air and dropping them, usually when she was supposed to be catching them, or revolving on the stage and feeling like "whipped cream".

During those days, she met her future husband, Steve Parker. Marriage and big time show-business simultaneously entered Shirley's life. She rose to the top of her profession through roles in films like "The Apartment", "Irma la Douce", and "Some Came Running", and won several Oscar nominations. She says: "Success in Hollywood (800,000 dollars a picture) forced me to evaluate myself. Now, suddenly, I had all the luxury, the money I wanted, but I still acted as though I had only 50 dollars."

I shopped in bargain basements...."

Motherhood, in the form of daughter Sachie, added a new dimension to her life. But wanting to broaden her horizon even further, she left films temporarily, and travelled all over the world. Her travels took her to Africa, where the Masai tribe made her their 'blood sister' Shuri! She came to India, too. "To me India was life," she writes. From here she visited Bhutan. After absorbing all

that she saw on her world trip, she went back to write about them. "All of it broadened my own understanding—not only of others, but of myself as well," she says.

Shirley is actress, wife, mother, traveller, and writer. One wonders what she will do next. "Talent is nothing but sweat," says the inimitable Shirley Maclaine. We know it, now that we know Shirley.

Sabina Valson

## "COVER STORY"

**W**INTER is a funny sort of season—it's so mixed! Sometimes it's so dreadfully cold that you shiveringly long for the long, warm days of June...at other times, picnicking at the zoo or crunching peanuts in the park, you wish winter would never end, and you're glad that the dry, dusty summer is far away. Even if you're lucky to live where it snows...it's fun while the snow is soft and new and you can build sniley, round snowmen (a pleasure which, sadly, very few Indian children have known)...but isn't it awful when the white wonderfull has turned into muddy grey slush, when the icy winds whip across your face. Even a joyful winter-time festival like New Year's Day isn't wholly glad, because it's always a little sad to have said good-bye to the year that was going away.

But springtime is one of those special things that is simply, purely happy. The cold North wind has blown away, and the burning heat of midsummer hasn't arrived. Everything is fresh and clean, and so alive...each flower, each bird, each little blade of grass and un-cocooning butterfly seems to be bursting with song, with the joy of just being alive. The world is bathed in colours of every shade....

Like our cover this month. The first thing that struck me when I saw it was the way it seems to burst in colours. The big, bright red flower that grows almost right in the middle (do you think it's a tulip?) seems to suggest the tremendous energy behind the blooming life of spring. Look at the way the main green stem seems to spread its arms out and touch every corner of the painting. And all around it, the flowers seem to be dancing to the glory of spring.

And the two children, of course...it is a children's world. Perhaps, very soon, they will be painting Easter eggs...or maybe playing Holi (everybody's favourite festival). But right now, they seem to be just enjoying their springtime garden. The girl looks peaceful and happy, content to sit and watch the flowers. But the boy seems to want to explore...as though the liveliness of spring won't let him sit still. Maybe he wants to sing (like you! like me!) along with that beautiful song that goes.....

Silver white winters that melt into spring—these are a few of my favourite things.....

**MPS**

# How the 'Tulsi' Became a Sacred Tree

"MY good man," said Indra looking at the strange man contemptuously. "I doubt if you have recognised me, but I am Indra, the King of Heaven!"

The strange-looking man blinked in an unconcerned manner and looked the other way.

"I'm talking to YOU, you fathead!" said Indra. "And it's the height of rudeness not to answer me! I ask you again—WHERE is Lord Siva?"

The man continued to stare at the snow-clad mountain and said nothing.

Indra was visiting Kailash, the abode of Lord Siva. True, he had not announced his visit earlier, but the total wilderness that faced him was indeed, unexpected. In fact, there seemed to be nobody around at all. Nobody but this strange-looking man. And he appeared to be both deaf and dumb! Exasperated, Indra decided to try again. "Where has Lord Siva gone?" he shouted. "And when is he expected to return? Haven't you a tongue?"

The man looked at him and shrugged. He had understood Indra all right, but obviously he didn't want to talk.

"I'll teach you to keep quiet, you disrespectful rogue!" cried Indra and struck him with thunder, which was always at his beck and call. But the thunder failed to touch the man. On the contrary, fire gushed out from his forehead and enveloped Indra in a bright cloud of flame. It was then that he realised who the strange man was! He was no other than Lord Siva Himself! Scared and penitent, Indra fell at his feet and begged his pardon. Lord Siva forgave him, smiled, and threw the cloud of fire into the sea.

The moment the fire touched the sea, it turned into a little child and began to cry loudly. The sea rocked it gently and called Lord Brahma to save the child and to give it a name. Lord Brahma picked up the child

in his arms, but before he could do anything, the baby caught hold of his beard and tugged it so hard that tears streamed down Brahma's face! "Good Lord! What a child!" he said, mopping his face. "And what strength!"

"What is his name to be?" the sea asked again. "We must call him something."

"His name! Now, let me see," said Lord Brahma nursing his beard. "He pulled so



hard that it has brought tears (jala) to my eyes. So he shall be known as Jallandhar."

The baby was gurgling happily now. Lord Brahma looked at his lovely face and blessed him with every boon a man could desire. "No one shall be able to conquer you except Lord Siva himself," he added, and made him the king of the Asuras. They were charmed to have such a delightful ruler.

Jallandhar grew up to be a mighty ruler, conquering one place after another. Fear was alien to him in any case, and the knowledge that none but the mighty Siva could conquer him very much added to his sense of security and confidence. He soon conquered the angels and was about to conquer heaven altogether when the angels, panic-stricken and desperate, rushed to Lord Siva and prostrated themselves before him.

"My Lord, save us from Jallandhar!" cried Indra with folded hands. "Destroy him fast, or there will be no heaven left! Everything will belong to the Asuras."

"Is it as bad as that?" said Lord Siva looking at Indra incredibly. "Do you mean

to say that you, Indra, the King of Heaven, and all your mighty warriors cannot deal with that chit of a boy?"

Indra hung his head. "You know he is unconquerable, my Lord. Lord Brahma Himself had granted him that boon. What power have we against a blessing like that? No, my Lord, you and you alone can come to our rescue!"

"Very well," said Lord Siva smiling, "I shall destroy Jallandhar since he is too strong for you."

Indra went back, relieved by the promise.

Jallandhar had married Vrinda, the daughter of Kalnemi, one of the Asuras. She was both beautiful and virtuous. She was also a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. The moment she came to know that Lord Siva intended to fight with Jallandhar, she sat praying to Lord Vishnu with all her heart that He might protect her husband. Moved by the sincerity and intensity of her prayer, Vishnu protected Jallandhar, and Lord Siva found it impossible to touch him.

In the meantime, the angels were greatly





intrigued and watched the fight in despair. What had come over Lord Siva? Why could He not slay Jalandhar, who was only an Asura? But try as He might, Lord Siva failed to destroy him. Then the angels realised the truth—that Jalandhar was being protected by Lord Vishnu. One and all, they then turned to Vishnu and sought His help. They, too, prayed with all their hearts, for, heaven itself was at stake because of Jalandhar. At last, Lord Vishnu was pleased and decided to help the angels. But He could not do so while Vrinda sat praying to Him. Her 'tapasya' had to be broken before Lord Vishnu could withdraw His protection.

As she sat praying, Vrinda was like a flame that nothing base could affect her. And nothing could disturb her intense concentration.

Lord Vishnu took the guise of Jalandhar and stood before her, knowing that her husband alone had the power to distract her thoughts. Seeing Lord Vishnu, Vrinda mistook him for Jalandhar and stood up to greet him. Thus the spell was broken. Her tapasya being interrupted, Lord Vishnu's protection no longer remained with Jalandhar.

Lord Siva saw it at once. "Go back to the land of Asuras," he called out to Jalandhar. "Heaven is not for you!"

"What! Go back!" cried Jalandhar scornfully. "Have I not conquered Indra himself? I'll conquer you, too!"

"You can't fight me!" said Lord Siva.

"Can't I? That's all you know!" said Jalandhar. "Let me just try!"

On hearing this, Lord Siva created a huge 'chakra' (circular weapon) by drawing a circle with his toe. The chakra twirled and spun on the waves of the sea. "Lift this up, Jalandhar," said Lord Siva. "If you succeed, then alone shall I fight you."

"Pooh! that's nothing!" said Jalandhar, who was indeed very strong. But in spite of his superhuman strength, he could hardly move it. But Jalandhar was not one for giving up in despair. He tried and tried, though sweat streamed down his face in the

attempt to do so. At last, he was able to lift it but the weight was far too heavy for him, and the chakra cut him in half.

When the news of Jalandhar's death reached Vrinda, she refused to believe it, for had not Lord Vishnu Himself promised to protect him? How could the Lord's words fail? Then she learnt of the trick and was full of grief. And heart-broken. She wept her heart out before Jalandhar's funeral-pyre. "I trusted you," she cried to Lord Vishnu, "and you failed me! But for your trick—which was as unfair as it was unkind—my Jalandhar would have been alive today." As Vrinda got ready to throw herself into the funeral-pyre, she cried out that for her there was no heaven. Who could she turn to when the Lord Himself deceived her?

Lord Vishnu could not bear her grief and disillusion. "Vrinda," he said appearing before her, "be comforted. Your devotion to me shall not go in vain. When you have merged yourself in the funeral-pyre, a tree shall spring up from your ashes. That tree shall be sacred to me and essential to my worship. And all the world shall worship that tree for my sake!"

Vrinda, cheered by His words, jumped into the fire. From her ashes was born the sacred Tulsi tree, worshipped to this day.

*(From the Padma Purana  
retold by Swapna Dutta)*

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# HOLIDAY ADVENTURE-2

## THE STORY SO FAR

**T**ONY and Mona, brother and sister, are orphans and have to spend the summer vacation in the school hostel. Basu, Tony's friend and in Class VIII like him, decides to spend part of his vacation there, as his parents are away on a cruise.

During the holidays, the children are left under the care of the librarian, Mr. Bhushan, who also looks after the school's lending library system through the holidays. The three children are not at all pleased with the prospect, for Mr. Bhushan is known to be mean and snappy. Tony, Basu, and Mona decide to keep out of his way as much as possible.

Mona, who is in the sixth class, shifts from the girls wing to a room next to Tony and Basu's in the boys wing.

The school seems so lonely and empty, once the last car has driven out with holidaying students, that

Tony, Basu, and Mona sit in pathetic silence for some time.

Later, they walk towards the orchard—out of bounds for all students—in a bid to persuade the 'mali' to let them play there during the vacation. At first, the mali charges out with a lathi trying to shoo them away. But when he sees the old shirt for his son that Basu is carrying, he relents—but with a warning, that they can play in the orchard any time before six in the evening. And 'Bhushan Sahib' must not catch them, or they will be punished severely.

Happy at their success with the mali, the three children stroll out—straight into Mr. Bhushan, who is obviously furious. From a shocked expression, his face changes into "a vivid mask of anger", while the children gape at him in silence.....

Now read on.....

**T**ONY who was the nearest to Mr. Bhushan, was startled when he felt a sharp tug at his ear. "Where have you been, you rascals?" Mr. Bhushan shouted. "Don't you know that the orchard is out of bounds? How dare you think that just because you are the only ones in school now, you can do what you like!" He paused for a moment and continued, "I won't have you three kids bothering me with mischief! I have plenty of work to do."

Mona felt terribly sorry for Tony, whose car was being twisted with every sentence Mr. Bhushan uttered. So, in the meekest of voices, she said, "Sorry, Sir, we're really very sorry. We promise we won't come this side again."

Mr. Bhushan released Tony's ear and said, "Now, remember this for future also. Run along now and get ready for dinner."

The three children turned to go away, but Mr. Bhushan's parting threat stopped them. "Just remember, if I find any of you again this side, I'll give you such a thrashing that you'll remember it all your lives!"

And boy! from his menacing tone, they were sure he'd carry out his threat, too. They ran back to their rooms to wash up without uttering a single word. Only when

they were ready to go down for dinner did they speak. "Don't you think he was rather mean?" asked Mona.

"Yes," replied Tony, "and you know, he just presumed that we were returning from the orchard. We could have been playing in the ground in between the orchard and the hostel!"

Basu joined the discussion. "Yes, after all, he never really saw where we came from. It just wasn't fair, the way he shouted. I really wonder, but is there something to hide in the orchard? He must be scared we'll see something, that's why he has stopped us from going that side. Otherwise, there's no rule to stop us from playing in the grounds which lie in between."

At the same time, Mr. Bhushan was wondering whether he had been too harsh with the kids. He could not afford to arouse their curiosity or suspicion. Just too much was at stake! He decided to be nice to them at dinner time.

At dinner, Mr. Bhushan made sweet conversation with the three. He asked them how they had planned to keep themselves busy. "It's going to be lonely for you," he said. "But you three will have to be happy with each other's company. I am going to be too

busy to plan anything for you."

After dinner, they returned to their rooms. They played 'Spellofun' for some time before going to bed.

Next day, they steered clear of the orchard, afraid they might antagonise Mr. Bhushan. After all, they had to spend the whole vacation with him, so they had better be in his good books.

Throughout the day, they amused themselves by playing various games. After dinner, they went up to their rooms, still not having made up their minds what they would do before going to bed. They went to Mona's room. Tony opened the window, which overlooked the back compound of the school, so as to let in some fresh air.

He was about to turn around after fastening the latches, when he saw Mr. Bhushan come out of the back door of the hostel and proceed purposefully towards the orchard. "Hey! Come here, you two," called

Tony. "What do you think Mr. Bhushan is doing down there at this time of the night?"

Basu and Mona rushed to the window. Just then Mr. Bhushan reached the orchard gate and looked around, almost as though he thought someone might be watching him.

"Down, quick!" whispered Tony. "He may



see us at the window with the light on. We must watch this. He seems to be up to something shady."

The three of them crouched on their knees, into a position where they could just peep out, without anybody outside knowing if there was anyone at the window.

By now Mr. Bhushan had entered the orchard and was going towards the mali's house. "Look!" said Mona. "The mali has already come out even without a knock on the door."

"He must have been waiting for Mr. Bhushan," remarked Basu.

Mr. Bhushan spoke to the mali for a few minutes and then, pointing towards their window, tried to explain something to the mali. They saw the mali nodding slowly as though he understood. Both of them turned round and walked away in the direction of the storehouse, which was at the far end of the orchard.

Mona, Tony, and Basu stood up and moved away from the window. Mona was the first to speak. "Sure, he is up to something wrong."

Basu replied, "No wonder he made such a fuss when you said you wanted to shift into this room. He was afraid we might see something suspicious going on."

After some guessing as to what Mr. Bhushan could be up to, the three went to sleep.

The next day being Sunday, they had permission to go out with one of the school peons who lived on the campus. They went for a movie. The rest of the day was uneventful and they went to bed early, looking forward to the morning when they could meet other children coming to the school library.

Morning came, and the three decided to go to the library early and get some books to read. They wanted to spend the whole morning there and make friends with the children who came to the library.

However, things were not going to happen as they wished, and when they picked up some books and sat in the reading section, they saw Mr. Bhushan coming towards them purposefully. They immediately sensed something was wrong and braced themselves for the attack.

Stopping in front of them, Mr. Bhushan



shouted, "You can't sit here. Take the books to your rooms. From today other children are coming to use the library. It's bad enough that I have to cope with them, but all of you together, no! I won't have that. God alone knows what mischief you'll get into! Come, I'll issue your books."

"But, Sir," pleaded Tony, "we want to meet the children who come here. We won't do any mischief."

"No, absolutely not! You can't meet the children. Now, don't argue with me, you cheeky fellow. I know what's good for you."

Basu gave another try. "But, Sir..." He got no further.

"I said, don't argue with me!" shouted Mr. Bhushan. "If you want any books, come and get them, otherwise go!"

Helplessly, the three walked away with their books, just as the first child, a girl about their own age, arrived. She saw them

and gave a broad smile and made a move to come and speak to them. Since they had been forbidden to talk to her, the three turned round and walked away from the girl, in the direction of their hostel.

The girl just stared at their backs thinking what unfriendly children they were.

Wistfully, the three walked away, while they really wished they could go back and talk to that pleasant-looking girl. Disappointed and angry, they went back to the hostel. Basu said, "Let's try and get a message through to her tomorrow. Maybe then we can make a plan to speak to her without Mr. Bhushan coming to know."

"I've got it!" exclaimed Mona. "We can tell her to park her car outside the gate and walk inside to the library. Then we can talk to her under those trees, near the gate. Mr. Bhushan won't be able to see us from the library."

"Brilliant!" answered Tony excitedly. "That's just what we will do!" Happy with their plan, they decided to be obedient to Mr. Bhushan from now on, so that he would not impose any more restrictions and spoil everything.

That night, Mona saw Mr. Bhushan again, while he was going to the orchard. The three decided that the next time they saw him go there, they would follow and find out for themselves what he was up to. They deliberately went late to the library next morning, hoping that 'their' girl would come at the same time. Luckily she did and just as they walked past her, Tony pinched her arm and whispered, "Pick up that bit of paper after we have gone."

They scrambled away quickly, lest Mr. Bhushan spotted them hovering about the entrance to the library. Very pleased with their little success, they went off to enjoy themselves. After lunch, they rested in their rooms and went for a swim before tea. A bit restless at having to wait for the night when they would begin their spying spree, they kept changing their activity every now and then.

After dinner they went straight to Mona's room to keep watch by turns. They decided to take 10-minute turns at the window. The three of them had finished one turn each and Basu was back at the window to

continue his watch. There was no sign of Mr. Bhushan and they were planning to give up for the day, when Basu saw him come out of the hostel.

"Quick! He's on his way to the orchard. As soon as he enters the orchard, we'll follow. Till then let's keep an eye on him from here."

*Karuna Behl*

*(To be concluded)*

## MY DREAM

I HAD a very funny dream the other day. I was walking on the road and God came to me. He asked me, "Do you want to come for a trip with me?"

I said, "Yes."

Then God took me to a big market. He was very handsome and rich. He got me many books and toys. When we came out, a car and a driver were waiting for us. The car took us to the sea. There we took a rocket and went towards the sky to see the moon. There were many monsters and giants in the sky. One monster was eating up a rocket. When he saw our rocket, he came to eat it up also. But God was there and, therefore, he could not do it. God killed him.

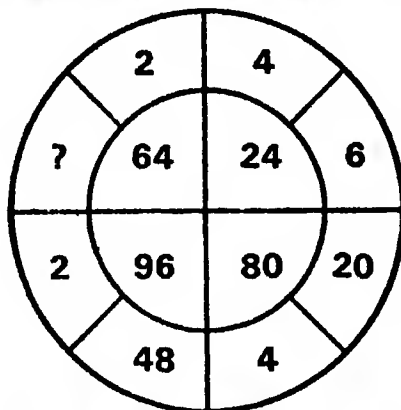
After some time, our rocket went out of order. So we went back to the earth. God said 'Good-bye' to me and went away saying he would come another day to take me for a longer trip. He shook hands with me, and I suddenly opened my eyes. My mother was trying to wake me up!

*Rahul Muralidharan (7)  
India*

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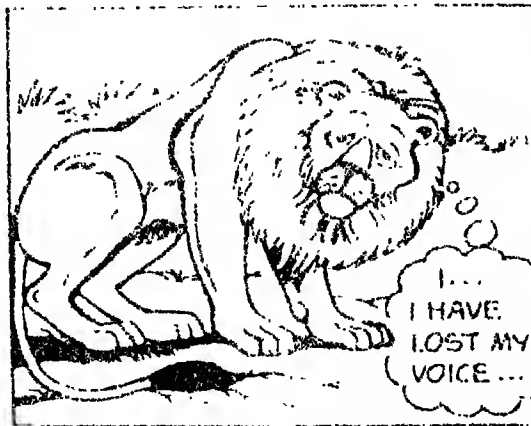
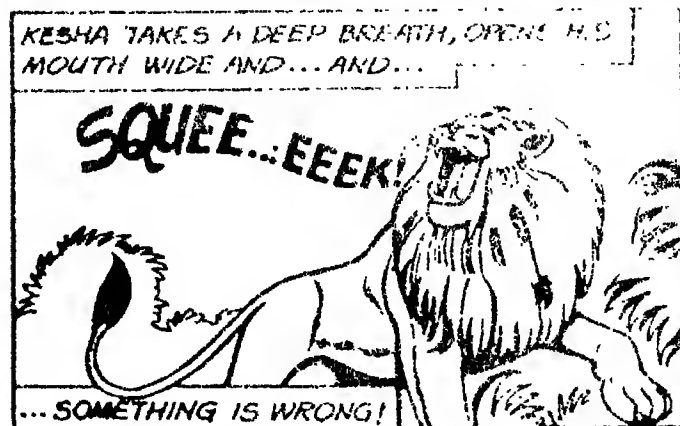
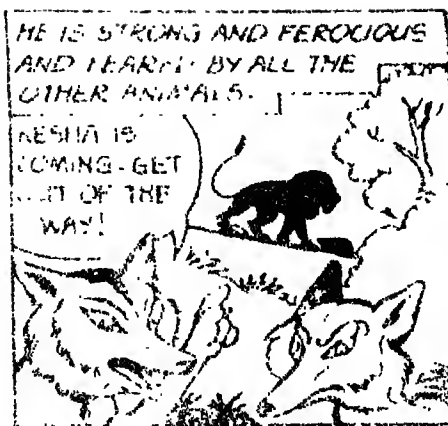
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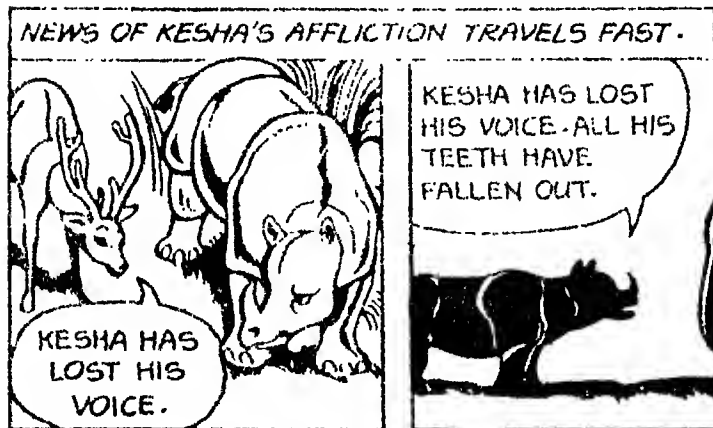
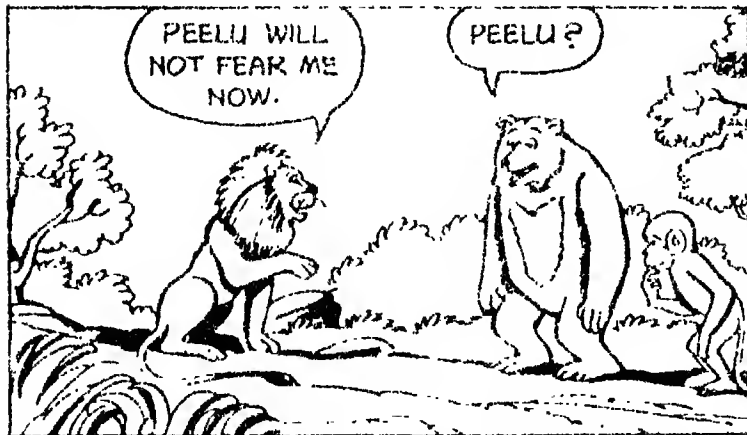
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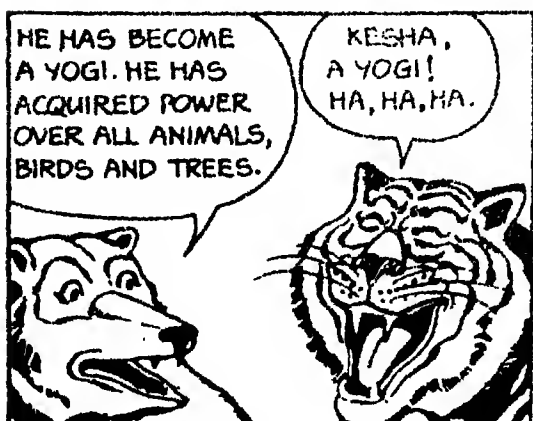
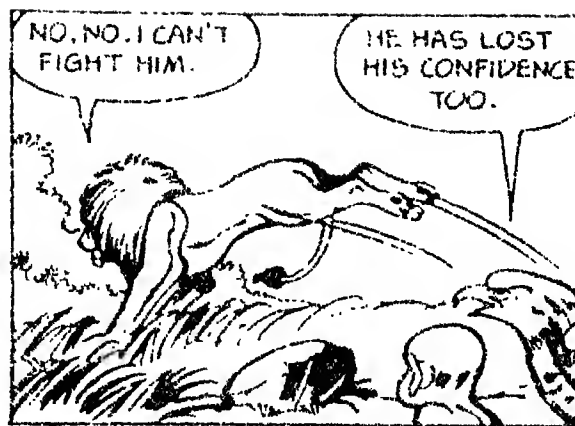


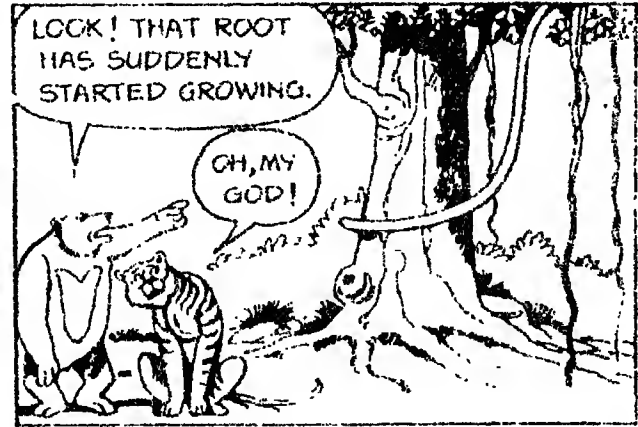
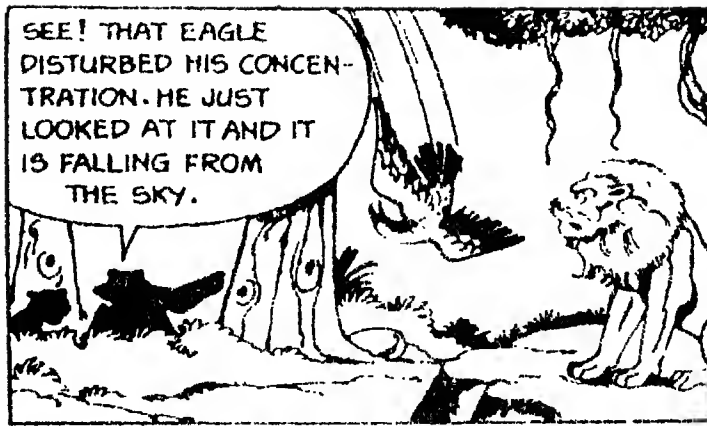
● ANANT PAI  
● MOHANDAS











# WHEN PAPA SCOLDED ME

**B**ABY, come for breakfast. Your milk is getting cold," called Bhaiya, my elder brother.

I quickly put on my slippers, picked up my favourite doll—Beeta—and rushed out into the verandah. It was a beautiful day. The morning air filled the place with the freshness of the day. 'Ah, ha! How lovely!' I said aloud, breathing in the morning breeze. I ran across the verandah, with Beeta tucked under my arm. While I gulped down the milk, I heard Papa calling out to the driver.

"Papa is still here, Bhaiya. He hasn't gone to the clinic, today," I said overwhelmed with joy.

Being engrossed in a magazine, Bhaiya did not reply, but I could see Papa talking to someone in his room, which was opposite the dining hall facing the verandah.

"Papa! Papa! I don't have to go to school; it's a holiday. Do you have a holiday, too? Look, Beeta has got fever," I said, all in one breath while circling around my father.

"No, my dear child, I don't have a holiday today. You go and play while I talk to Mr. Singh. He is very sick. I'll ask the Compounder to give some medicine to your doll," my father said to me, lovingly.

It was quite unusual to find my father in the house at that time, because he would have gone to his clinic before I woke up in the morning. That was why I was very happy to see him at home. My father wiped his spectacles with the kerchief as he listened to his patient carefully.

I came out into the balcony when I heard, "Baby! Baby! Come here, see this." It was my brother from the verandah. He had spread himself on an easy chair and our dog, Tom, was dancing around on his hind legs. I burst into laughter.

"Papa will give medicine to Beeta," I spoke showing off.

"And I'll ask Papa to give some medicine to his darling daughter, because...because she laughs and laughs," said Bhaiya, tickling my tummy and sending me into more fits of laughter. Being the youngest child of the family, I received everyone's attention and affection. Of course, most from Papa.

I ran from one end of the verandah to the other and then into the balcony in joy, sticking around Papa's room to get his attention while I played. I swung on the curtain, thumped the door, tapped on the table, pulled and pushed the chair. "Look, Bhaiya, what variety of sounds they make," I said, pulling the chair, then with a leap rapping at the door, clapping my hands, jumping all the while.

"Don't," pleaded Bhaiya, not taking his eyes off the book in his hand.

Racing back to the window of Papa's room, I saw him still busy with the patient. I loved to see him there before me, while I played. He must be enjoying it, too, I thought, to see me play around in his room.

I dragged a chair and climbed on to the table. This activity drew Papa's attention.

"Beeta, be careful, you'll fall down," he said tenderly.

"Look, Papa, I am taller than everyone," I beamed with an ear to ear grin which made my eyes disappear, and all one could see was a set of white teeth and chubby cheeks.

Both Mr. Singh and Papa smiled back. I thought that Papa was not fully convinced. So I spoke again raising my hands above me, "Papa, I'm a big girl, now."

He nodded with a smile and continued talking to the patient.

I touched all that I could reach with my hands till I got to the black light switch 'No, you should not touch it.' I imagined my mother speaking.

"If you touch it, you'll get hurt," Bhaiya had told me once. This was a 'forbidden' article for me, but how attractive it looked—black against the light blue wall. Unable to resist the temptation to feel the switch, I pressed it down and on came the light with it. I immediately pushed it up. I was scared. I looked at Papa with large anxious eyes, but he was busy writing something. 'He did not see me.' I relaxed when I realized I had not been observed. I looked at Papa again and then at the switch which implored my hands to feel it again.

"I'll do it just once more, okay?" I said softly. I repeated the act again and was, unable to stop myself from doing it again and again. I seem to have disturbed Papa who was concentrating on the patient's problem. Without looking up from the book, he said in a serious voice, "Don't do that, you might get a shock."

The klick-klack of the switch and the glow in the bulb which went off and on with it

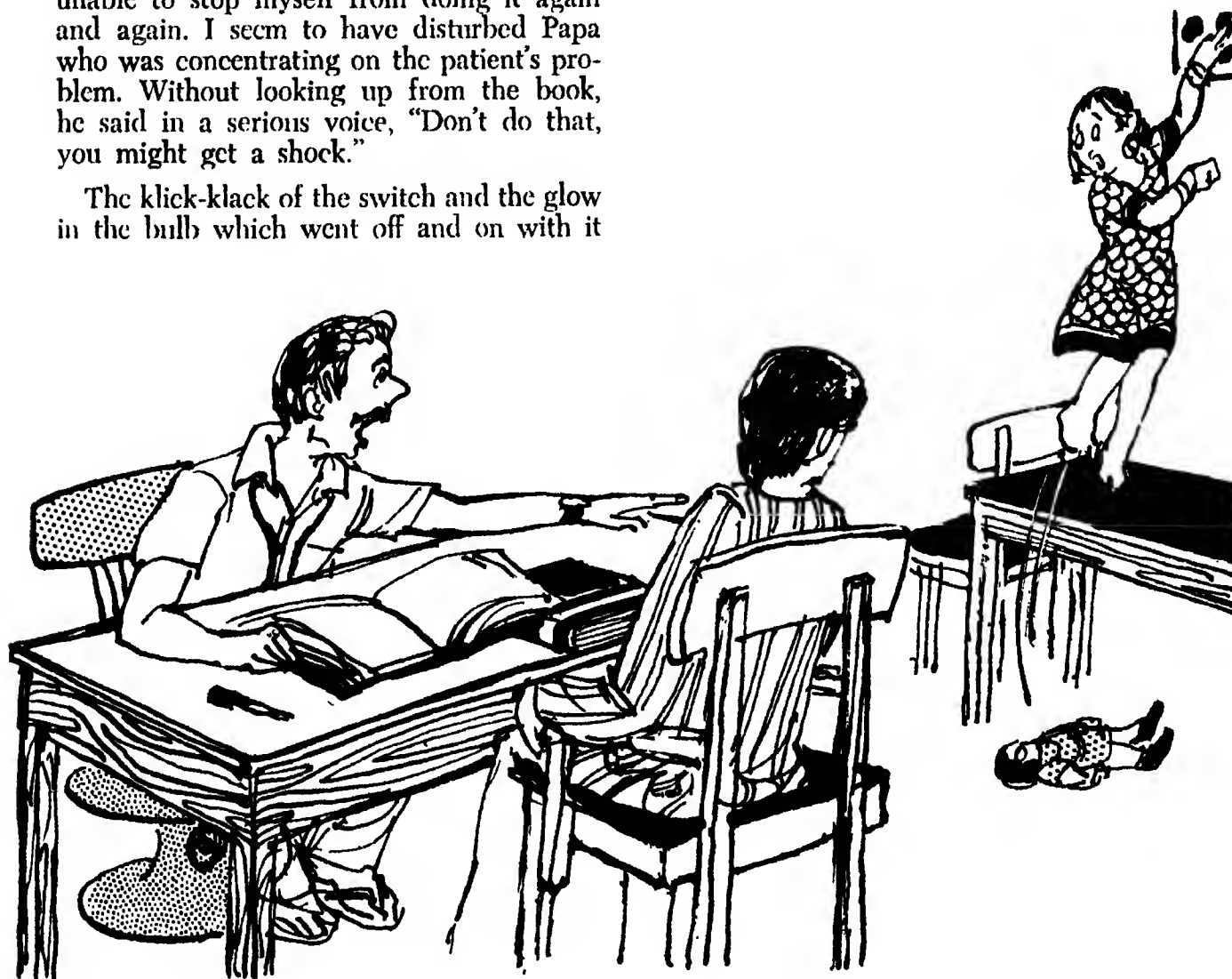
fascinated me. "Baby, come here, let Papa work," called my brother.

I ignored all. This switch game was most enjoyable at that time.

"How fantastic! I press it—the light is on, I push it—the light goes off," I muttered.

The patient, obviously, had some serious problem. My father sat with four books open in front of him. My activities sure disturbed him. Completely exasperated, he put down his pen and spectacles and scolded me in a loud voice, "You're not listening to me. GET DOWN FROM THERE!"

My trance broke with his loud voice. I gaped at him wide-eyed in a shocked state. He looked at me with a fixed gaze, expecting to be obeyed instantly. I was startled



at being scolded so loudly by him—scolded by my Papa. Papa, a very softspoken person, who was known never to raise his voice, had SHOUTED in anger at his darling daughter. I was very angry with him.

I jumped down from the table with a loud thud and raced up and down the balcony. My breath quickened, my face went red with anger, and my eyes felt hot with unshed tears. Throwing my hands about, I raced up and down wanting to destroy anything that came my way.

Hearing the commotion Bhaiya came there. "What is it?" he asked. My fury found a ready victim for I ran towards him and pushed him. I felt like bursting into tears. I rushed and pulled at the curtain in Papa's room, which came down with the force. I saw Papa talking to the patient with his usual cool.

'How unthoughtful, of him! He is not a bit bothered about my being so angry with him.' I was fuming all the more.

I went back into the room thumping my feet noisily and angrily. Standing close to Papa, I raged vehemently, "Why couldn't you say it softly? Why did you speak so loudly to me?"

The next moment I came out to the balcony and stood beside the money-plant pot. My eyes were now full of tears. I plucked a leaf and shredded it to pieces. The sound of a chair being pushed in Papa's room reached my ears and then I heard his footsteps coming closer to me. I tried to run away in annoyance, but Papa caught me. He pulled up my face towards him and picked me up. Tears came rolling down my plump cheeks. He patted my head lovingly and wiped my tears.

"Oh, you big cat!" said Papa, shaking my head cordially.

The warmth of this affectionate gesture melted my wrath. A moment later I was once again the same blithe and happy child playing around the house.

*Ira Saxena*

*(Courtesy: Writers Workshop)*

# HOMELAND

*(Composed during a recent visit to India)*

If you grow one flower,  
a whole garden will grow,  
If you grow one pine tree,  
a whole forest will grow.  
If you leave the birds to freedom,  
you'll make the homeland nicer.  
When you smile and you're happy,  
your homeland smiles with you.  
When you're in love with some blue bow  
and your heart grows up  
As big as the whole love in the world,  
and your homeland is in love, too.  
She is here to make you happy,  
she will send you the birds  
That you made free,  
she'll give you the flowers that you  
grew.

She will give you the shade of  
the pine tree that you grew.  
And your sadness is gone.  
If you pick up a leaf,  
you've picked up a part of you.  
If you pick up a flower, or shoot a bird,  
your homeland is poorer  
For one heart, one smell, one song.  
The sunshine, rivers, forests, birds and  
flowers,

All this is beautiful if you care for it.  
When the birds sing,  
both your heart and homeland sing.  
When the sun shines,  
both your heart and homeland shine.  
When the rivers ripple,  
both your heart and homeland gurgles.  
And then, you'll ask yourself: WHY?  
Why the flowers smell so nice  
when you've grown them?  
Why the forests murmur nicely  
when you've grown them?  
Why the birds sing so nice  
when you've made them free?  
The reason is—  
the beauty that pervades your  
homeland.

*Gordana Beric (14)*  
*Yugoslavia*





#### FROM CHINESE MYTHOLOGY

**I**N Chinese mythology, there are many charming tales about animals. One such story explains why some cattle have twisted horns, and others straight ones.

There was once a Thai girl who, being hungry and thirsty, went to drink from a mountain stream. As she drank, she noticed a vegetable root floating on the water. The leaves had been eaten by some animal, but the fleshy part was whole and untouched. She, therefore, drew it out of the water and, peeling it, ate the inside. It was sweet, and satisfied her hunger and thirst.

After some time, a baby girl was born to her. The village folk were happy, for the child was sweet and good, besides being a beautiful singer and dancer. She grew up to be a lovely girl, so that all the men fell in love with her. But, as she had no father, no one was prepared to marry her, and the women began scorning and taunting her.

The girl was sad and bewildered at this harsh treatment, and went to ask her mother why she had no father. At first, her mother refused to answer, but when the girl coaxed and pleaded, she finally gave in. She told the girl the story of her birth, and added it was no use trying to find her father, for he was sure to be so ugly that she would dislike him. But the girl was determined to find her father, and remarked that no matter how hideous he was, the man would still be her father.

Finding her daughter quite determined, she explained that her father was not a man, but a holy ox. He had revealed this to her in a dream, the day the child was born. He had also told her that it was he who had eaten the leaves of the root, and that he lived in the high mountains.

The girl then asked her mother why she had made no effort to search for him. To which her mother answered that she had been afraid to leave her daughter alone in the hostile village while she went on such a quest, in case the villagers harmed her.



# THE TWISTED HORNS

The girl then decided to go and look for the ox and asked her mother how she could recognise him. Her mother told her to carry vegetable roots with her and feed them to the oxen in the mountains. The ox which ate only the leaves would be her father.

So, the brave girl bade farewell to her mother, and set out on her long and lonely journey. She met several oxen and fed them with the roots she had taken with her. At last, deep in the mountains, she came across an ox that refused the root and ate just the leaves. Her heart leapt with joy. But she said nothing, and merely followed the ox to a cave, where he lived with other holy oxen. In the morning she swept the cave, and when the oxen returned, they were astonished to find it so clean and fresh. This went on for sometime until, one day, the ox who was her father stayed back, and discovered the girl cleaning the cave. He knew at once that she was his daughter, and was very happy to have her stay.

The girl continued to live with the holy oxen in their cave, and soon all the oxen grew very fond of her. But, when winter came, her father, thought loath to lose her, told her to return to the village lest she perished with the cold. But the girl refused, saying nothing would induce her to leave her father, and she would stay with him, even if she died of cold. Touched by his daughter's love, he decided to build her a house, to protect her from the bitter cold and biting winds.

Now, the only building material he had was a pair of horns. So, he asked the other oxen to give him their horns, to build the house. They willingly agreed and he began his work. When only one more horn was needed, he called out, "Enough." The oxen were still twisting their horns to take them off, and when he called 'enough', they stopped.

And that is why some cattle have twisted horns and others straight horns.

*Geeta Chowdhry*

## Enchantment

Wandering on the hills and glades  
I saw a gurgling stream.  
The beauty there was so enchanting  
I felt it was a dream!  
There was a cool breeze of spring,  
The birds were chirping gay  
The flowers bright were happily nodding,  
It was a 'heavenly day'  
Rippling and flashing in the sun  
The waters went by clear,  
Like gems and pearls the shining pebbles

Were dancing in the river.  
And in that lovely place I saw  
A very jovial company  
Of birds and beasts  
And flowers of colours many.

A hare went by, a lark it sang,  
My heart skipped a beat.  
The water shimmered, a fish leapt up  
A monkey jumped up high  
A herd of gulls, a flock of geese—  
They flew in the deep blue sky.  
The joy in my heart was unbounded  
I felt most light-hearted,  
An inky blackness came over  
The scene of beauty it thwarted.  
I saw the things again—  
Table, school bag and books  
I realized then with sorrow  
Alas! 'twas really a dream!

*Prakash S. Murthy (12)  
India*

# AUTHOR WHO BROUGHT JOY TO MILLIONS OF CHILDREN



**A**MONG the many popular children's authors of international repute, the name of Enid Blyton ranks high. It was exactly a decade ago that the writer who had brought joy to millions and millions of children all over the world passed away.

Enid Mary Blyton was born in 1900 in Dulwich, London. From her school days, she had loved writing, and her first published work was a poem in a children's magazine brought out by Arthur Mee. She was only fourteen then.

Earlier, Enid had wanted to make music her career and, when she was eighteen, was all set to take the L.R.A.M. examination and enter the Guildhall School of Music in London. However, at the eleventh hour, she decided to become a school teacher instead! The decision was probably prompted by the realization what a joy it is to teach children and tell them stories. She had cherished this joy during her own regular Sunday School sessions. Wishing to specialize in kindergarten work, she studied at a Froebel Institute and subsequently came out in the field of Educational Journalism and soon became the Editor of 'Modern Teaching' and Associate Editor of 'Pictorial Knowledge' and part author of 'Two Years in the Infants' School'.

Her first book for children, 'Real Fairies' (a collection of her children's verse), was published in 1923. About this time, she was contributing regularly to 'Punch'.

It was in the mid-thirties that she became a prolific writer of children's books. Her own children's magazine, 'Sunny Stories', was soon published, which was very successful and contained many serials and stories later to be published in book form.

Among her earliest books for children were 'The Adventures of the Wishing Chair'; (1947); 'The Enchanted Wood' (1939); 'Mr. Meddle's Mischief' (1940); 'The Naughtiest Girl in School' (1940); 'The Adventures of Mr. Pinkwhistle' (1941); 'The Adventurous Four' (1941); 'Circus Days Again' (1942); and 'The Magic Faraway Tree' (1943).

Since those early and tumultuous days, she had become... 'a phenomenon', 'a legend', and sometimes even a 'controversial figure' in the world of children's literature. She had published over 400 books, of which about 200, at a rough guess, are constantly in print!

Among the very popular books brought out in series are those featuring the 'Famous Five', the 'Secret Seven', 'Malory Towers',

'St. Clare's', the 'Mystery' series featuring the Five Find-Outers and a Dog, the 'Secret' series accounting the adventures of Jack, Mike, Peggy, Nora, and Prince Paul, the 'Adventure' series which follow the adventures of Jack (Freckles), Phillip (Tufty), Dianah, Lucy-Ann, and Kiki the parrot, Jack's inseparable companion, and the 'Barney' books in which the reader follows the adventures of Barney, Roger, Diana, Snubby and, of course, Loony and Miranda. Not less popular are the series of Mr. Galliano's Circus, the Wishing Chair, the Magic Faraway Tree, the Six Cousins, the Family Series and, of course, her books of yet another popular character — Noddy — which alone have sold over 11,000,000 copies. Even a cursory glance at the long list of story collections, nature study books, etc, would reveal that Enid Blyton catered to all ages and tastes of juvenile readers. She once said "...take a child by the hand when he is three and walk with him all his childhood days."

She had about twenty-five British publishers and about forty others outside Britain, and her books have been translated into almost every language around the globe — Russian, Swahili, Hebrew, Indonesian, Tamil, Fijian, to mention only a few. According to a survey carried out in the late sixties, she comes third in the list of Britain's most translated authors, being 'beaten' only by Agatha Christie and William Shakespeare. Till the sixties, she had 399 translations published throughout the world.

Enid Blyton also wrote a successful play for the London stage—"Noddy in Toyland"—and another play based on the "Famous Five" for older children. She wrote the screenplays of several films for the Children's Film Foundation. In 1952, she started and edited another children's magazine for many years, called "Enid Blyton's Magazine". She devoted much of her time to helping charitable organisations, particularly those benefiting children and animals. She also formed clubs, like the "Famous Five Club", to give readers a chance to help these charitable organisations.

She was married to a surgeon, Kenneth Darrell Waters, who died in 1967, barely a year before her death in December, 1968. Even after she became Mrs. Waters, she

continued to write under her maiden name, and lived in a beautiful country house called 'Green Hedges'—their family home—at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, with her husband and two daughters, Gillian and Imogen. (See photograph on facing page. Imogen is at extreme right.)

In spite of her popularity, some educationists, teachers, and librarians frown upon Enid Blyton's stories, describing them as 'trivial', '... indifferently written', and '... unimaginative', among other things! In fact, some public libraries in Britain even banned her books from their shelves. Whatever that be, children of all ages the world over read and enjoy her books even today.

*Umesh Gaikwad*

## From night to dawn

Ah, the moon, the stars!  
Just look, just look how far they are—  
Out in the starry night, now no bird in  
flight,  
For you know, they are waiting for  
dawn,

As the sun is rising  
Even nature is awakening.  
Lo! the birds are out to fly,  
Their silvery wings across the sky,  
And the rose buds are opening,  
So delicately, oh! so refreshing.  
The chirping of birds,  
Droning of the bees,  
Mewing of the cat,  
Bleating of the sheep—  
The bus out on the road,  
Full of children on the way to school,  
Shouting a-glory!

Hip Hip Hurrah !!!

*Archana Sharma (13)  
India*

# Sixteen Centuries in Six Tests

**T**HE most momentous event that has happened to the game of cricket in recent times was caused not by any cricketer, but by the Australian television tycoon, Kerry Packer. With the large scale 'defection' of most of the world class cricketers

India's 'little master' Gavaskar accepts with folded hands greetings from one of his little fans, while the umpire gently leads him away, so that play could go on at Ferozeshah Kotla on the first day of the Delhi Test.



to the World Series Cricket (appropriately nicknamed Packer's Circus), commercialisation threatened to engulf the game in a big way. But as events prove, Packer's Circus is turning out to be a big flop, while Test cricket retains its popularity. It was with great enthusiasm that cricket-lovers the world over keenly followed the recently concluded West Indies-India series. It proved a success, judging by the spectators' response and its contribution to the game, though in five out of the six Tests, extraneous circumstances played the most crucial role.

The series began at Bombay on 1 December last year, and predictably, the greatest performer on the opening day was rain, which restricted play to just 45 minutes!

Though he won the toss, Kallicharan leading the Caribbeans, weakened by the absence of stalwarts like Roy Fredericks, Gordon Greenidge, Vivian Richards, Clive Lloyd, and Andy Roberts, decided to put India in to bat on a rain-affected pitch. It seemed Kallicharan's gamble was paying, as India ended the day with 57 for one, Mohinder bowled, and Chauhan retired hurt. But the second day belonged to the Indian skipper Sunil Gavaskar who, on that day, began filling his bag with records. He hit up a superb 205, and aided by Chauhan (52) and Viswanath (52), helped India reach 424.

Gavaskar's 16th Test century was his third in successive innings after having scored 111 and 137 in the final Test against Pakistan at Karachi. Thus he became the first batsman in the world to score three consecutive centuries in Tests twice, having earlier achieved the feat in 1971 in West Indies where he scored 117 not out in the fourth Test and 124 and 220 in the fifth. But ahead of the 'little master' are luminaries like Jack Fingleton of Australia and Alan Melville of

South Africa, who scored four consecutive Test hundreds. Capping them all is Everton Weckes of West Indies, who achieved the distinction no less than five times in succession.

Gavaskar also became the top Indian scorer against the West Indies, passing Polly Umrigar's 1,372 in 16 Tests, with his 1,477 in 11 Tests.

Though West Indies began disastrously losing both the openers for 13, Kallicharan led a grand rally with a personal contribution of a superb 187. Murray (84), Gomes (63) and Parry (55) helped their side gain a lead of 69 runs over India. But this was to no avail as time was fast running out. The rest of the Test was a mere exercise in batting by India. The only noteworthy feature of the Indian second innings, which stood at 224 for two when play ended, was our opening partnership of 153 by Gavaskar and Chauhan, which bettered the previous best of India against West Indies—136 by Gavaskar and Gaekwad at Kingston in 1975-76.

At the second Test at Bangalore, Kallicharan was again lucky with the toss, and this time elected to bat. Bacchus, who hit up a beautiful 96, with Kallicharan (71), Shivnarainc (62), and Gomes (51), helped the visitors pile up a very respectable total of 437. As if this was not enough, they had Gavaskar out first ball bowled by Clarke, beautifully caught by Shivnarainc. But Gaekward, who came in place of Mohinder Amarnath, scored a career best 87. Vengsarkar (73), Viswanath (70), and Ghavri (43) contributed valuable runs to the Indian innings. All these efforts notwithstanding, Clarke (5 for 126) and Phillip (3 for 86) restricted the Indian total to 371.

West Indies thus began their second innings with a lead of 66, but Ghavri was not to allow them the advantage. Despite two dropped catches, one a return chance, Ghavri bowled superbly to end the day with an analysis of 24-8-51-5. The visitors' score at the end of the fourth day was a mere 200 for 8 despite a fighting 82 by Gomes. The game was wide open and the spectators were looking forward to a scintillating day's play when it was abandoned on grounds of law and order. Once again the fate of the match



Vengsarkar sweeps off Holder. His 109, together with Gavaskar's 120 and another 126 not out by Kapil Dev, helped India declare their first innings at Delhi at 566 for 8.

(Photographs by our Staff Photographer)

was decided by forces other than cricket.

India went to Calcutta with fond memories of 1975, when Patandi's team defeated Lloyd and company, though this time India was without the services of the then match-winner Chandrasekhar.

Gavaskar, who won the toss, celebrated the luck by hitting another Test ton, this time a beautiful 107, in the Indian total of 300. In scoring a hundred for the 17th time in Test cricket, Gavaskar earned the distinction of completing 4,000 runs in Tests. Also he completed 1,000 runs in a calendar year for the second time, the earlier being in 1976. This distinction had earlier been achieved only by Ken Barrington of England.

The Indian batting prodigy is now behind only Bradman, Hammond, Sobers, and Cowdrey in the number of Test hundreds.

Kapil Dev, who scored 61 in his own rough and ready way, was the other major contributor to the Indian innings. For the Carribeans, Phillip claimed 4 for 64 and Parry 3 for 51.

Basil Williams (111) scored a magnificent century for the visitors. Helped by Kallicharan (55), Shivnaraine (48), and Phillip (47), West Indies again gained a lead of 27 runs in the first innings. Venkataraghavan, who bowled a tight line and length, returned with the flattering figures of 4 for 55, while Ghavari earned 3 for 74.

The Indian second innings was a delight for the ordinary spectator as well as the statistician. The Indian skipper scored a superb 182 not out, and with Vengsarkar (157 not out) carried the Indian total to 361 for one before declaring, setting the West Indies a target of 335 in 360 minutes. Their second wicket stand of 344 set a new record on either side and against all visitors to India topping the 237 by Roy and Manjrekar at Kingston in 1953 and 255 by Kanhai and Morris at Calcutta in 1962. But the more important distinction was that the little master of India became the world's first batsman to score a century in each innings of a match for the third time.

Statistics apart, West Indies seemed to save the day and the match, when Murray scored 66 and Kallicharan 46. But Ghavri (4/46) and Venkat (3/43) thought otherwise. Wickets began to tumble one by one in the afternoon. West Indies were 9 down for 197, when an appeal against light was upheld during the 19th mandatory over. What a scintillating finish to a superbly played match!

Thus, with three matches robbed of a decision by extraneous forces, all eyes were turned to Madras, which held the reputation of providing decisions to all Tests in close to two decades. Kallicharan, who was lucky with the toss, had to rescue his side from total collapse and he did it with a magnificent 98 when the local hero, Venkat, bowled him. Kapil Dev, who began by dismissing Bacchus without a run on the

board, ended with 4 for 38, while Venkat earned 3 for 60.

If Kallicharan rallied his side, India had a Viswanath to do the job. The stylish little master, always a delight to watch when in form, cut and drove the ball to all parts of the ground to score his seventh Test century. His 124 helped India score a first innings lead of 27 runs. For the visitors, Phillip bagged 4 wickets for 48 and Clarke 4 for 75.

India pressed the advantage where Venkat (4/43), Kapil Dev (3/46) and Ghavri (3/52) shot the visitors out for a paltry 151, thus getting for themselves a victory target of 125 runs with more than two days to go. Under extreme pressure India, aided by Viswanath (31) and Kapil Dev (26 not out) registered the first and only victory of the series, with three wickets in hand and a day-and-a-half to spare.

The fifth Test at Delhi contributed, if anything, to the statistician's books only. The Indian run machine called Gavaskar hit up his 19th Test century, his tenth against the Windies. He surpassed Vijay Manjrekar's 586 against Dexter's England in 1961-62, by already scoring 691 in a home series. He also crossed Gary Sobers's aggregate for the India-West Indies series, 1,920 in 18 tests (30 innings), in only his 27th innings.

Gavaskar's 120 was followed by a breezy 60 by Chauhan, a laboured 109 by Vengsarkar, and a delightful 126 not out by the crowd-pleaser, Kapil Dev. India declared at 566 for eight. This was the second time India scored three centuries in an innings, the earlier occasion being 1955-56 when Umrigar (223), Manjrekar (118), and Kripal Singh (100 not out) hit up tons against West Indies.

When the Indian bolwers—Kapil Dev (3/59), Ghavri (3/54), Venkat (2/14), and Chandra (2/33)—bundled the visitors out for a paltry 172, India began relishing the taste of an innings victory. But rain, the villain of the piece, willed otherwise. On the fourth day and fifth day together play was possible only 140 minutes plus the 20 mandatory overs. When the visitors ended with 179 for three, an otherwise interesting match petered out to a dull draw.

Kanpur, the venue of the sixth and final



Test, is reputed as a batsman's paradise and had rarely provided a decision in matches. Still, both sides were hopeful as it was to be a six-day match.

Gavaskar won the toss and, in an unusually belligerent form, hit 40 runs in 50 minutes with 2 sixes and 5 fours before he fell to Marshall. But Chauhan held on to make 79. Though Vengsarkar was out cheaply Viswanath, who always scored well whenever his captain failed, was at his best. He cut and drove the ball effortlessly to all parts of the Kanpur Green Park as only he can. He went on to score a magnificent 179, his best so far, and his third hundred at Kanpur where, on his debut in 1969, he had scored a brilliant 137. Aided by two other centuries, by Gawkwad (102) and Mohinder Amarnath (101 not out), and a cavalier 62 by Kapil Dev, the darling of the crowd, India declared at the astronomical total of 644 for seven, their highest ever in Test cricket.

West Indies, in reply, ended the third day with 137 for the loss of Greenidge and Gomes. Bacchus, who was going strong, shredded the Indian attack to pieces, carried his bat through on the fourth day to remain unbeaten with 204. Even the night watchman, Jumadeen, defied the Indian attack to score 56. At the end of the day, the visitors were 373 for four. But whatever interest remained in the tall-scoring match died down

as rain washed away the whole of the fifth day's play.

The sixth day's proceedings, confined to part of the afternoon, was only of academic interest. West Indies ended the day with 452 for eight, Bacchus earning the distinction of scoring the highest in the series, 250 with 33 fours. Once again, rain had its say in the match.

The series on the whole will be remembered for two aspects. First, as rarely happens, a decision in five out of the six matches was rendered impossible by factors which had nothing to do with cricket. Three matches were soaked in rain, one was abandoned at a nerve-shattering stage because of bad light, while political developments brought an early end to an otherwise absorbing match. Only the Madras Test was spared, which India won creditably.

The other aspect of the series is Gavaskar, the Indian skipper. In his very first series as captain, Gavaskar passed many milestones in his illustrious cricketing career, pushing in more and more records into his bag. He has not many to overtake now. The India-West Indies series belonged to the Indian batting prodigy, though he himself graciously described the happy-go-lucky Kapil Dev as the man of the series.

*Radhakrishnan*

## CRICKETERS IN THE HOUSE

"THE battle of Waterloo was won on the cricket fields of Eton," said a famous writer.

Now, whether the boys enter the cricket field or not, their thoughts are full of cricket, and if thoughts can win battles, we certainly should win not merely battles but also wars!

Whatever else I can boast of or not, I can always take pride in my twin sons Rain and Laxman in their teens. They certainly will become warriors, if for no other reason at least for their absorbing interest in matters relating to cricket.

Their team does not consist of 11 or 12

men. It has two members, one a bowler and the other a batsman. My youngest son, Mitra, acts as umpire for both sides.

The cricketers enter the field looking glum as sportsmen generally are. Their nerves are taut, their faces exude confidence just like Tony Greig or Clive Lloyd or Bedi or Gavaskar or who ever else is famous in the cricket world.

The boys cannot easily get the wicket stumps, and so a lone stick driven into the ground serves as a wicket. The bat is sometimes the one they borrow from the school and when this is not possible, a piece of wood



looking like a bat will serve the purpose. Now and then they get a cork cricket ball weighing exactly 5½ ozs, at other times they make do with a discarded tennis ball.

The game begins: in fact, the battle is joined because every shot is greeted with whooping war cries by both the contenders, with the umpire yelling at the top of his voice words such as 'beautiful', 'marvellous', 'good shot', and so on. Sometimes I wonder whether our front yard has become a real battlefield. Runs are counted, but each run is for two yards only.

Meanwhile, the mother comes out and, surveying the damage caused to plants, shrieks asking the boys to stop. Actually, she has with her own hands planted the creepers and seeing the vandalism caused by the ball hitting them, vents her spleen on the boys and even tries to beat them. But they run off quickly and evade chastisement.

The boys have not gone anywhere else in search of a new playground. Once their mother disappears into the kitchen, they file back silently and commence the game after the 'break', so to speak. For a time, the war cries are subdued, the oral count of runs is more restrained, but as time passes, the game becomes hotter, the voices become high pitched, and the thud of the ball on the bat is more intense.

Well, that is that and the merry game goes on day after day; sometimes at noon, other times in the evening until visibility is nil.

Each of the cricketers in my family thinks he is another Bradman or Ranjit Singhji, and sometimes each one thinks of himself as Larwood of bodyline-bowling fame or some other West Indian bowler of great renown (I do not remember the names of many famous cricketers, but my sons can and reel off the names non-stop and can even remember their highest scores). They can describe to you what a hat-trick is and why a sixer is applauded by the audience so lustily. In their opinion, a cricketer who does not hit a sixer is no cricketer at all. The youngest in the family thinks he is the best commentator available in the world.

That brings me to cricket commentaries: When a test is on, there is no other avocation for my sons except listening to the commentary. For the duration, there are no stu-

dies, not even meals. The excited voice of the commentator, when someone hits a four or when a wicket falls, is reflected on the faces of my sons. 'Gavaskar is one short of a century', 'Kirmani took 5 wickets'—words of that sort almost shatter the house.

Once again the mother appears. The babel of voices of my sons and their friends disturb her siesta and she comes out cursing them all. There is studied silence during her stay at the radio. Once she turns her back, the same top-voice discussions about the merits of a particular player and evaluation of the several players who participated in the game are resumed. Again the mother comes out and drives away all the boys. While going out, my sons snatch the transistor, to tune it on after they reach a safe place.

She is angry with me, that I do not control the children, that I am too indulgent with them, and that if this attitude of mine continues, they are sure to get plucked in their examinations. I try to pacify her by saying after all, boys should enjoy themselves in order to become happy citizens, and that even if they played cricket according to their own notions and resources, yet it is exercise for their limbs; and who knows they might not some day become outstanding cricketers, and, therefore, they should be exonerated?

**G. Ramamurti**

## Kapil's Century

In came Kapil Dev,  
Swishing his bat right and left.  
Tall and lofty, with a smile on his face,  
Happily he set his pace.  
A ball, bowled the bowler  
Off it went for a four.  
Then came a series of sixes and fours.  
In a moment he completed his hundred  
'n' four,  
He went up to 126 not out, people saw,  
But, oh! the match—it ended in a draw!

**Chandrika Pani (13)**  
**India**

# MAROONED OFF A METEOROID

## THE STORY SO FAR

*The scene: Epsilon Eridani, a star system billions of kilometres away from the sun. The wreckage of a spacecraft lies among a debris of rocks. A distress signal brings to it rescuers from another star system. Cautiously, but enthusiastically because they have sensed the presence of life, the explorers reach the wreckage. The metallic glow of the spacecraft guides them to the door hatch which lies open.*

*Contrary to their expectations, the rescue of the living being inside poses no problem. They find him dying, but succeed in reviving him with an energy dose. "Armstrong IV calling! It's an emergency!" he cries out as if from a tape-recorder. When pacified, the voice heaves a sigh of relief. "I knew aeons ago you'd come, my rescuers!"*

*"How did you reach this star system? When did you come?" ask the rescuers.*

*The being then narrates his story: "We were floating in space. . . collision. . . Armstrong IV of the Lunar Base Archimedes. . . on a mission called Jules Verne. . . a record with me will shed more light on the mission. . . my captain had given it to me before he died. . ."*

*A click, and they heard a different voice "The space around me is full of stars, yet I seem to be fated to die on this Eagle which I am riding. My computer colleagues assure me help is at hand. They have been trying to contact Space Station-X, the nearest to us, which seems to me the only hope. Meanwhile let me keep a record of my disastrous mission.*

*"It was April 10, 1972. People in Montana in the USA saw a black spot hanging in the sky. They thought it could only be a meteoroid. They feared it might fall on them and stamp out all life. But soon it was miraculously seen bolting away from them! People forgot the meteoroid, but not the astronomers. They wanted a spacecraft to land on it with instruments. Project Verne, called after the great science fiction writer, was got ready. I foolishly volunteered to serve on this*

*secret mission. The thought that I might one day return like a hero was tempting me. While we waited for another meteoroid in the second half of the twenty-first century, it appeared on the scene much too soon. It was the second month of 2025. I was given the honour of landing on the meteoroid which was named 'Eagle'. Along with me in the specially-designed spacecraft, 'Armstrong IV' were five computers—Pinto, Simpo, Xeno, Lucy, and Able. I was asked to land on the meteoroid when it receded from the earth. I matched my speed with that of the 'floating island'. My spacecraft landed in a crater on the meteoroid. It was a bizarre world. I could not inform the earth of my historic landing as Jupiter, now facing me, blocked my radio signals. Asking Simpo to keep an eye on me, I came out and set foot on the meteoroid. I went for a survey and soon lost sight of my spacecraft. The glare of Jupiter was too much. Before I could decide my next move, I felt a tug at my life wire. Not Simpo, because I had not commanded him to do so. A malfunction of the systems?*

*Now read on. . .*

## 4. THE STRANGE CREATURE

*"I AWAITED a second tug on my life wire and it came. A shiver ran through my spine. Somebody was actually holding on to it! Though overtaken by panic, I did not lose control of myself. I promptly called Simpo.*

*"Simpo! Are you doing this mischief?" I asked him in a trembling tone.*

*"What, Chief, what mischief?" he countered in his usual controlled and accented tone.*

*"Aren't you pulling at my life wire?" I was naturally doubtful. After all, during our training, not even once had Simpo done any such mischief.*

*"No, Chief, I am not doing anything. Is anything wrong with the wire? Hope it has*

not got entangled on any craggy hill. Look around, Chief.

"I felt another tug as I steered my head to look around. My senses again panicked and I began to quiver from inside. Now it was certain that somebody was after me. Who then could it be other than an inhabitant of the meteoroid? I felt a cold seeping into my bones.

"That someone was watching me began creeping into my uncertain mind. I again scanned the horizon in all directions, but there was no one. I reassured myself many a time. Having seen nothing, a fresh courage surged through me. I shook off the doubts eating me and began to continue the task of surveying. I climbed a dune and was not there for more than a few minutes when I heard a scraping noise. It sounded as if somebody was sweeping the ground with a broom. From the vantage view the dune provided, it did not take me long to spot a creature in that silvery darkness. It was unlike anything I had seen on earth!

"Sitting on top of another dune, the strange creature was intently watching me. Four beady eyes—two yellow and two red—stared at me. Many arms, which were curling and swishing producing that eerie scraping sound, jutted out of its central tortoise-like back, while two wings, like those of a beetle kept obliquely folded, were on the alert. It was quite close to my life wire and that explained the tugs I was feeling.

"I stood transfixed, unable to decide whether to run myself or to tease it into running, when the creature showed me it had that remarkable power called intelligence! It extended one of its arms towards the wire and pulled at it. A mixed feeling crept into me. If this incident had happened on earth, I would have had a hearty laugh at it. However, in an isolated place as this, cut off as I was from the earth, I became apprehensive about my very survival. I could only then thank my training officer who had insisted, very much against my wish, on incorporating in my spacesuit a pouch carrying a laser gun. I then fumbled intuitively in the pouch to see whether the gun was there.

"Before I could take the gun out, Simpo

interrupted: 'Chief, have you got yourself out of the wire trouble?'

"How else could I have replied other than give a wild bark "No!", as I sensed the creature to be preparing for an attack. It came lumbering down the dune towards me, its arms raised up—just as a cobra does while attacking. Quickly, I took out the gun and fired at the approaching creature. But, in that panicky state of mind, I missed it on all occasions. However, the powerful light of the laser beam certainly stopped the creature for a while. To my dismay, it did not send the creature fleeing for cover, instead it spurred it on to attack with renewed vigour. For me there was then only one way to escape from its clutches.

"I took a mighty leap into the air. Naturally, as the meteoroid was gravity-less, I climbed up much above that world till my life wire, which then acted as a tether, strained at me. If this wire had not been there, I would have naturally drifted out of the meteoroid and would have got lost in the abyss of space.

"From that vantage point, nearly at an altitude of 100 yards above the meteoroid, I could easily see my spacecraft sitting in a crater right beneath me. I then felt relieved as I had nothing to fear from that creature. But this relief was only momentary, as I saw the creature heading straight for me on its wings. Intuitively I pressed the emergency button. Cautiously but slowly I was then pulled towards the spacecraft. And before I could command Simpo to pull me into the spacecraft quickly, I saw the ugly face of the creature right in front of me. It began hovering about me as I fired at it frantically with my laser gun.

"As destiny would have it, I somehow killed the creature eventually, but not before I got a mighty whack of its arms on my chest. While I limped back to the safety of my spacecraft, I saw its corpse floating in space, drifting away from the meteoroid due to the impact it received from the laser beam.

"I don't know whether my mission would ever be communicated to the earth. This last speech of mine is being recorded so that, if it ever comes to anybody's hand, he will know about this historic trip. Man

till this date, i.e., 20th of February 2025, has not been able to find intelligent life anywhere, so I become the first man to have achieved this distinction."

As the strange voice slurred away like fading sunlight, the voice of the being snapped to attention.

"Hello! Hello! My dear rescuers, I hope you find the mission unique and historic. But you don't ask me who it was."

"We are not curious about who he was," cut in one of the explorers. "We are curious to know how you landed on this planet of Epsilon Eridani system."

"Of that I have no idea," sighed the controlled voice of the being, "except that the meteoroid, along with our spacecraft, collided on to it."

"Anyway, your Captain seems to be a strange creature," said another explorer after a moment of silence. "How did he, by the way, die due to a whack on his chest? We never do!"

"You want to see him, eh?" queried the being. "His body is lying in the adjoining compartment, which fortunately has not been shattered."

In obvious excitement, one of the explorers rushed towards a gleaming side hatch and soon came out, carrying on his shoulders the body of a man. The sight of the man created a mild stir.

Words went unheeded as the explorers stood around the body, baffled, blinking at each other, and glancing at the body. It was all beyond their comprehension. At last, one of them said, "I am unable to solve this puzzle. I was amused when you called the captain a strange creature. This is in reality a strange creature!"

There was a burst of laughter over this remark. When it subsided, another explorer said, "Let us carry this being and this strange body to our Chief Brain. He alone could solve this mystery." All nodded and went into action immediately.

The explorers brought the body and the being into the cabin of their fish-like ship and displayed them before their Chief Brain.

The explorers had not displayed the 'puzzles' for long when the multicoloured lights on the panels of the Chief Brain began to twinkle. It was a signal to the effect that

the Chief Brain was fascinated. They could then anticipate a quick reply, when a shrill whistle blew and they snapped to attention. Silence prevailed in the cabin for some time, and then a deep-throated voice was heard. It was of the Chief Brain.

"My dear friends, let me first congratulate you on the fantastic discovery you have made. You will be glad to know that you have discovered both our ancestors and our creators! The being that you have saved from dying is certainly of our kind. It is one of the first breed of ancestors that our creators made. Called then, in that 20th century, the talking, listening and thinking Computers, they were the first rung in the ladder of our evolution. From it, we shall certainly know a lot about our extinct creators. Three cheers to all of you!"

As the mild stir created among the explorers due to this exclamation by their Chief subsided, the Brain continued: "The other body that you have carried on to my place is that of one of our creators, called Man. For a century or so, we were evolved in stages by them. First we were created to think, then to learn, memorize, and utilise logic. Later, we were given the freedom to act, walk, and even to kill. Only, a few decades after our full development, as Providence would have it, our creators were no more. It was as if our creation was their duty, which they did, and they vanished due to the changes in the climatic conditions that came about. Now that we have discovered one of our creators, we must carry it carefully back to the earth and make a monument of it there. However, before we depart for home, let us pay homage to him for the adventure he took upon himself, enabling us to have a look at our creators."

Could the Captain, who thought himself marooned and his mission a waste, have ever dreamt in his life time that, some millions of years after his adventure and death, he would be duly paid homage and made a hero—and that, too, back on his home planet? He must never have. This is something which no one knows: What happens after one's death?

*Dilip M. Salwi*

*(Concluded)*

# "God Made Me a Magician"

(The story of Roy the Mystic as narrated to Ajit Krishna Basu)

"**G**OD seems to have decided that He would make me a magician—by profession. It happened like this . . . .

"In my native city of Dacca (now the capital of Bangladesh), as a senior school boy, I played the role of a messenger in a stage play organized by the youngsters of our locality. The director, who had little confidence in my acting ability, had not assigned any role to me, and this made me very, very sad. With tears in my eyes, I appealed to him to give me a role. He obliged me with the only role that had been left out—the role of a messenger. He had just one brief appearance in the play, to deliver a letter to the king with a bow and then leave the stage with another bow! I gladly and gratefully accepted the role, and went on rehearsing it with religious zeal, determined to win applause by my excellent acting. However, I was so nervous and unwilling to enter the stage, when my turn came, that the prompter had literally to push me onto the stage! I made a ludicrous mess, and the whole audience roared with laughter. I had to back out of the stage in great disgrace, booed by the crowd. Later, I became the laughing stock of the whole area and earned the nickname 'The Great Messenger'. This humiliation made me take a solemn vow that some day I must so dominate the stage that audiences everywhere would applaud and adore me.

"Shortly after that, Professor Emin Suhrawardy, the famous magician, gave a few shows of his wonderful magic in Dacca. One particular item, the startling illusion called 'Girl floating in mid-air', turned my head. The whole audience applauded the great Emin like one man. 'I must become a great magician like Professor Emin,' I vowed to myself. My life's decision was made. But how to become a magician? Who would teach me magic?

"Taking courage in both hands, I approached the majestic magician and begged

to be his disciple. He gently but firmly refused and discouraged me, assuring me that it was not easy to become a magician. But his refusal only made my determination stronger. I racked my brain day and night, trying to guess how he had overcome gravitation to keep his beautiful lady assistant afloat in the air without any support. It was 1907 and I was a boy of sixteen.

"Magic became my mania, and it told visibly on my appearance so much that a sports teacher, whom I knew intimately, one day asked me why I looked so sad. I explained my plight. He smiled and asked me to follow him to his residence where he gave me a book: Professor Hoffmann's MODERN MAGIC. He said I could keep the book as long as I wanted and make use of it. It contained an explanation of the illusion which had turned my head, and was an exhaustive guide to sleight-of-hand magic and stage illusions. I made Hoffmann my 'guru' in absentia (like Ekalavya did of Dronacharya—see *Children's World*, February 1979) and started strenuous practice of the sleight-of-hand tricks so wonderfully explained by him in his monumental work—tricks with cards, coins, handkerchiefs, balls, eggs, and strings. The invaluable book was a veritable gold-mine to me. I gained in confidence in Professor Hoffmann and myself, when I successfully mystified the sports teacher with some tricks mastered from the book he had himself given me!

"A few years later Emin visited Dacca again. This time he had included Ventriloquism in his repertoire and his wonderful presentation fascinated his whole audience, myself perhaps most of all. Ventriloquism, coming from the French, literally means 'talking from the stomach'. In it, the voice is produced in such a manner that the sound seems to come from a source other than the vocal organs of the speaker. Professor Emin had a beautiful ventriloquial

doll representing a young boy of six or seven. On the stage, he placed it on his knee and made it delightfully alive with some smart movements and witty talk. Of course, it was Emin himself who did all the talking, but he projected his voice so wonderfully, without any visible movement of his lips or tongue, that the illusion of the boy-doll talking was perfect.

"I approached the great Emin again and begged to have some lessons in ventriloquism from him. This time, too, he did not agree to oblige me. I was determined to master Ventriloquism and rival Emin in this art, and God helped me in my ambition. I came to know of a very good book on the art, namely PRACTICAL VENTRILOQUISM by Robert Ganthony. I found it a wonderful guide. Robert Ganthony became, again by proxy, my guru in Ventriloquism as Hoffmann had been in Magic. I never met either of them.

"Ganthony, my unseen guru, would have been highly pleased with the success of his lessons on me, for Ventriloquism proved to be one of the most popular items in my programme during the best years of my magical career. I shall, however, never forget the dangerous predicament into which my 'wonderful ventriloquism' once put me. It was in a village in Bihar where I had gone as tutor to the young son of a well-to-do Bengali gentleman. I knew I could practise and rehearse magic thoroughly in undisturbed seclusion there, before launching into another venture on the stage. My debut as a professional magician (in my native city, Dacca, in 1912) had very disastrously proved a flop, attracting catcalls instead of applause! It was this disastrous experience that taught me there is a sea of difference between knowing how a trick or illusion is performed and being able to perform it really effectively.

"The young boy was not much beyond his post-alphabet stage, and so his education did not take up much of my time. I had plenty of leisure to devote to the practice of magic and made maximum use of it determinedly. I tested my skill on the local people, including the servant of the house, and they were amazed by my feats, attributing them to supernatural powers. There was a bush adjacent to the house. After midday meal, I

often stole into the bush to practise ventriloquism. I used to stand under a tree, look upward at a bough overhead, imagine someone seated on that bough, and engage in a ventriloquial conversation with that imaginary person, alternately projecting my voice in such a manner that the talk sounded as coming down to me from the bough overhead.

"My frequent entry into the seclusion of the bush had aroused the curiosity of the superstitious servant, and several times he stealthily overheard my ventriloquial practice and mistook it as my conversation with ghosts over whom I, very obviously, had great influence and control! Deeply absorbed in my practice, I was not quite aware that the servant of the house had begun to spread the impression that the 'tutor' was a great master of occult, superhuman, supernatural powers who regularly held conversations with spirits and had great control over them. The rumour, as it happens with most rumours, spread far and wide and crossed over to the adjoining villages. And, one day, a crowd from a neighbouring village arrived with the body of a young boy and assembled in the courtyard. They sought an interview with 'the tutor sahib'.

"The house was practically besieged; there was no way of escape. I had to face the crowd. The leader of the party, a hefty fellow, came forward and explained to me that the boy had died of snake-bite the day before. The local *ojhas* first, and then the doctors of the government hospital, had all failed to save him and so they had come to me as their last, and sure, resort, for they had heard of my great power over the spirits of the dead with whom I held regular conversation! He prayed, or rather demanded, that I should command and compel the spirits under my control to force the life-spirit of the boy to re-enter his body, or to bring the boy back to life.

"I protested that this was beyond my powers, beyond anybody's powers, but the superstitious and adamant crowd would not believe it; they thought I was unsympathetically unwilling to take the little trouble. My host, who could feel the pulse of these people, whispered to me that unless I somehow satisfied them, they might even go to



the extent of killing me in anger for my callousness, for they would believe that I, with my control over the spirits, could not bring the escaped life-spirit of the boy back into his body.

"I was in a desperate situation, but suddenly I had a brainwave. I said I wanted to see the body. It lay on the ground under a tree, covered with a sheet of cloth. I knelt in front of the body, pretended to listen to his heart-beats, and then stood up and looked at the bough of the tree overhead. "Ah, there is the spirit of this boy seated on the bough, don't you see?" I said to the people, pretending to see the boy's spirit with my supernatural vision. Then, looking up towards the imaginary spirit of the boy, I commanded it to come back into the body immediately. The spirit of the boy, in reply, angrily shouted down from the bough overhead, speaking through the nose (as ghosts are supposed to speak!) that the body was too rotten for him to go back into it. Had

it been 'fresh', he would have gladly re-entered it, the boy's spirit added.

"As you can guess, it was I who was speaking ventriloquially, without any visible movement of my lips, throwing my voice in such a manner that the villagers were convinced it was the boy's spirit shouting from above. The awe-stricken villagers were similarly assured that if they still insisted on him to re-enter this rotten body, he would break the necks of some of them, but if they didn't so insist, he would soon be reborn in the same family with a fresh body. Everyone of these villagers hated the idea of having a broken neck and approved of the boy-spirit's alternative proposal. The crowd departed with the body for its earliest possible cremation, and I breathed a sigh of relief. The very next morning I took leave of my host and left the village for good, for fear that some other party might come with a 'fresh' dead body!

*(To be concluded)*

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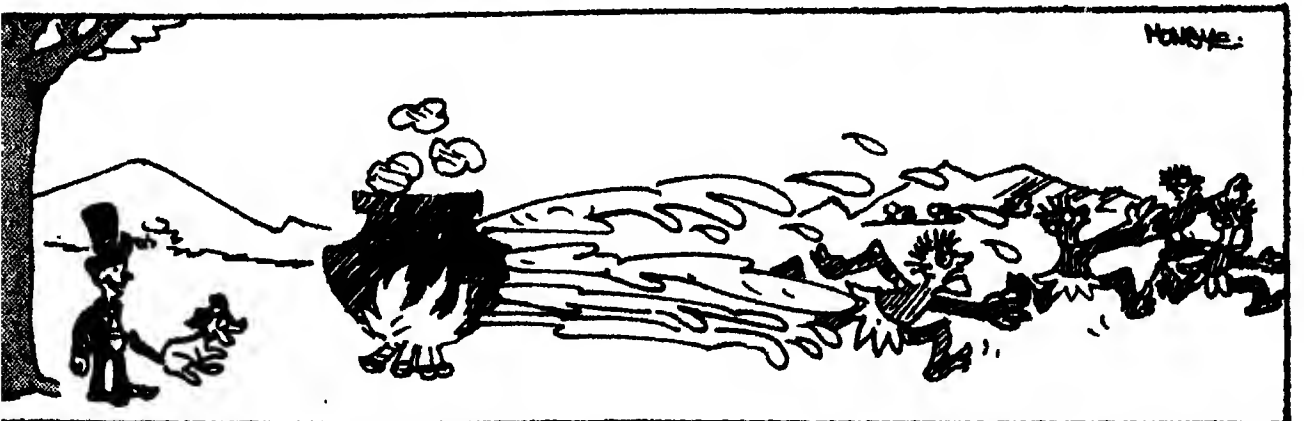
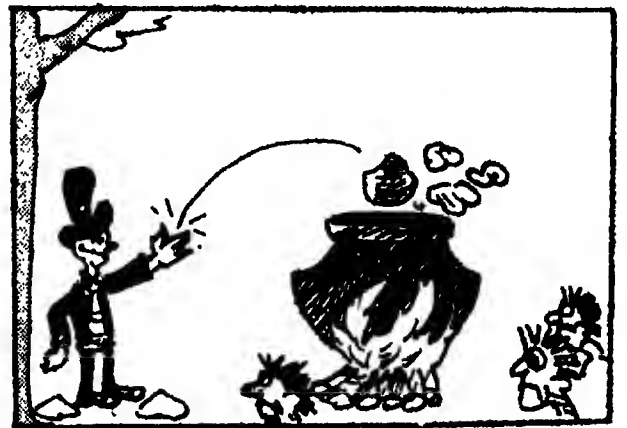
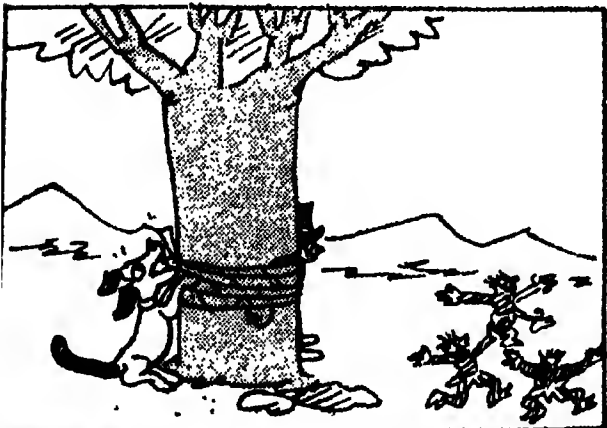
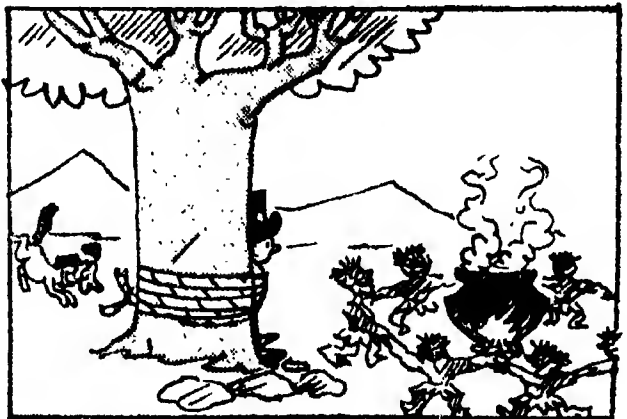
# MAYAN

## The Magician

by Monaye

*(See facing page)*





# “By Adults, for Children”

**P**ERHAPS you have noticed a spurt of activities for children since the New Year especially in the field of entertainment. In Delhi, at least (and, I'm sure, in cities and towns all over India, and all over the world!) we've had book exhibition, dances, films, plays, TV programmes, photograph shows, 'Beautiful Baby' shows, and many other such things for the International Year of the Child. Recently, a theatre group for children, **Bhoomika**, presented a dance drama that was unusual, both in theme and perspective.

“Saagar”, as its name implies, was about the sea, and as its name doesn't imply, was about man's venture into it. **Bhoomika** is actually a group which dances for children: the dance-actors are adults. You might think that this would stilt their performan-

ce, since adults do have this irritating tendency to “look down” at children. But if you do, you're wrong! The **Bhoomika** artistes don't believe in picking themes out of Moral Science textbooks. “Preaching to children is just not done!” they insist, and I'm sure you would agree. And the response they get from their audience is something fantastic. I've never seen anything like it, anything. At times, the music was so infectious that everybody spontaneously started clapping in time! The dancers, mostly professionals, find this spontaneity the biggest difference between adult and child audiences. “Adults are so stilted,” they grumble. (One up for us!)

“Saagar” tells the story of a young and eager photographer (played by Bharat Sharma) who unfolds to the world, and to himself, the secrets and the utter beauty of life

Yellow crabs and fishmaidens...“Saagar” describes the wonders of the sea



in the ocean. In one of his sea adventures, a shark whom he tries to photograph (Gopal Nair) permanently injures his leg. Even though he has to walk with crutches, the photographer haunts the seaside, his courage undiminished, longing to return to the beauty he had seen.

The whole ballet was set, unusually, entirely under water! And believe me, the effect wasn't easy to create. Partly the fabulous stage sets, detailed and elaborate, and partly the "liquid" flowing movements of the dancers, the fishes flitting in and out (Rashmi Saini, Lakshmi Krishnamoorthy, R. Parvati, and Sumit Chadha) and the crabby yellow crabs (Narayan Singh, K.K. Mohan Das, and Ranjit Chaudhary) managed to make you forget that this was a stage. At least, I really felt like I was at the bottom of the ocean, discovering the wonders of the sea; and when the shark thundered in, the little girl in the seat next to me hurriedly climbed into her Mummy's lap and closed her eyes.

After "Saagar", the group presented three short ballets. The first one was "Panchatantra ka Sher", the story of the rabbit who outsmarts the stupid lion by making him believe that the reflection in the well is another lion challenging him. And the stupid lion becomes so furious that he jumps in to fight with his reflection—and that, of course, is the end of him. I have no words to describe the beautiful rendering of this old and popular story.

"Leheratay Rang" (Dancing Colours) was a gay dance with coloured scarves—blue, red, green, and orange. It wasn't a ballet, because it didn't tell a story, but it was pretty and soothing, after all that action!

Last of all, there was a hockey match (not a real one, of course). I have never seen a hockey match that was even half as funny as this one. Nothing funny really 'happened'—the players collected, warmed up, started playing, inevitably just missed shooting goals, and so forth—but the energetic jumpy movements, the crazy expressions, the old Referee who ran around trying to look wise and stern (failing utterly, of course), and the perky music, just brought the house down. Nobody—I mean nobody—wanted to leave the auditorium when it was



The undersea 'photographer' takes a shot of the fishmaidana

all over. Even the little girl (who had been scared of the lion and the shark and who thought the Dancing Colours leader was the Rabbit's Mummy) was terribly disappointed to hear that that was the end!

I hope you will enjoy your 'TYC Specials' as much as I enjoyed mine, and be careful not to miss out on all the fun that's being planned for you.

*Minnie P. Swami*

"Look! There's another lion in the well," says the rabbit in 'Panchatantra ka Sher'



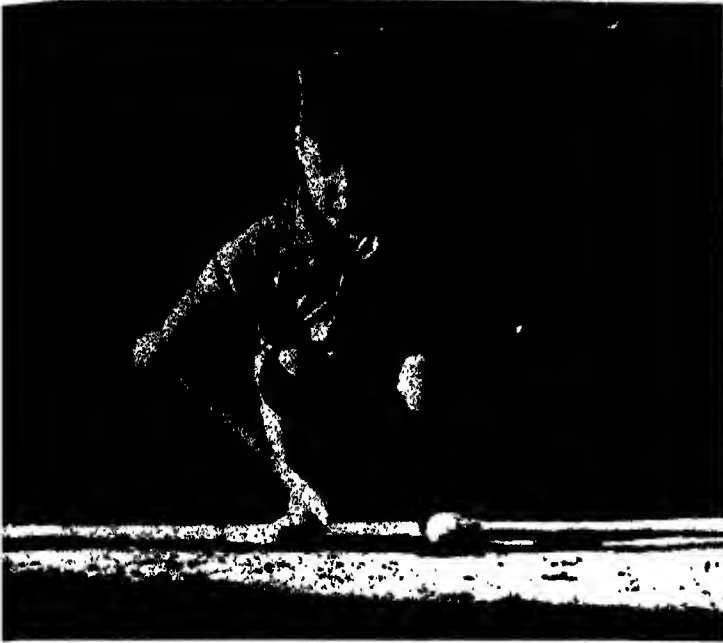


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**TO SCHOOL WITH *Bata***



"This stretch seems to be okay."



2. "Here I go!"

## "GILLI DANDA"

4. "Howzzat?"

"There! And now for a hard strike."



(Photo feature by R.B. Shinde)



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